

THE
ZEALOUS
CHRISTIAN

Taking Heaven by
HOLT VIOLENCE:

IN SEVERALL
SERMONS

Tending to direct men

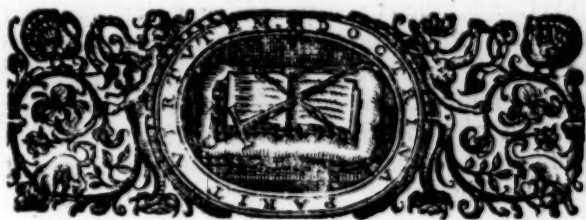
• How *To beare with Zeale,*
To pray with importunity.

Preached by that faithfull servant of Jesus Christ,
M^r *CHRISTOPHER LOVE*,
Late Minister of *Laurence lury*, London.

-- The violent take it by force, Mat. 11. 12.

LONDON,
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Goldsmiths Row in Cheap side, 1657.





TO THE
CHRISTIAN
Reader.

READER,



THE good acceptance which this
Authors Treatises, (already
published by us) have found,
and the good success they have
had among the people of God,
together with the important
desires of many godly persons,
that were hearers of these *SER-*
MONS, have put us upon re-
commending them to the
world. The subje& of these Sermons is not only pious
but seasonable. *Every thing* (saith Solomon) *is beautifull in*
its season, Eccles. 3. 11. The times wherein we live, are
famous for a *Form of Godliness*, and no lesse infamous

for the want of the *Power* of it. Nothing is more common then for men to heare, and pray, and perform the out-side duties of Religion: nothing more rare, then for men to doe these things as becomes the Gospell. Men have so inured themselves to disputes about the circumstantials of Worship, that substantials are lost in the scuffle. And therefore it is commendable in a Minister, to reduce the thoughts and hearts of people from needlesse controversies to the practicals of Christianity. As *Socrates* was commended for bringing down *Philosophy*, from high and sublime speculation, to use and practise.

It was the care of this Reverend Author, not so much to gratifie the fancies of men, as to work upon their affections, and to direct them in the ordering of their conversation: and that the rather, because he observed most men had more heat in their Brains, then in their Hearts. That zeale that once appeared in the professors of this Nation, is evaporated. That violence that sometime was in the people of this Nation after Sermons and Ordinances, is now abated, and grown remisse; nay, in some, the hatred wherewith they hate the Ordinances and people of God; is greater then ever was the love wherewith they loved them. That praying Spirit, that not long ago was shed abroad in the hearts of Gods people, is now as it were departed:

It is therefore high time to bespeak this careless Nation, or rather the Professors of this Nation, with that message which God sent to the Church of *Ephesus*, *Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first workes, or else I will come against thee quickly, and will move thy Candlestick out of his place.*

And oh! may these ensuing Sermons be usefull to revive those sparkes of zeale and importunity, that lie as i

were under the ashes. That was the end which the Author aimed at when he preached them to his Congregation, and that is a main end that we look to and hope for in the publication of them. The times wherein we live are times of much hypocrisie. There are many among us *that say they are Iewes, and are not; that have a name to live, and are dead: yea, there are many that seem to be religious, and yet not only deceive others, but also deceive their own selves.* And therefore it is time for every man to search and trie *if there be any way of wickednesse in him.* All is not gold that glisters, nor are all Saints that so call themselves, or are so called by others.

Rev. 2. 9, 3, 1.

Here then is a Touch-stone by which you may examine your selves: Here is a Balance of the Sanctuary, wherein you may weigh your graces, and see whether they be light or no. It is one of the vainest and most foolish things in the world, for men to cheat themselves of eternall happinesse. We count it folly for a man to suffer himselfe to be cheated in a bargaine, and yet what is lost in one bargain, may be regained in another. But here he that is cheated, is cheated irrecoverably. The losse of the soule is irreparable. Precious is the redemption of souls, and it ~~ceaseth~~ for ever. And yet there is a strange stupidity among the sons of men, whereby they are willing to be deceived, and judged out of their soul-happinesse. They are willing to rest themselves upon any groundlesse presumption, though it be so weak that they dare not put it to triall in their own hearts, themselves being Judges. O all you poor deluded souls! *How long will you love vanity, and follow after lies?* When you may go a sure way, why will you run a hazard? Awake therefore O thou that sleepest, and seriously betake thy selfe to this weighty, necessary and profitable duty of examinations

Psalm. 4.

nation; and in this worke we hope this Treatise will be usefull and acceptable; which if it be done, and the other branch not left undone, the Authors desire in preaching is satisfied, and our expectation in publishing answered; and that both those ends may be obtained, is the earnest desire of

*Those that seek not
yours, but you:*

Edmund Calamy.

Simeon Ashe.

Jeremiah Whitaker.

William Taylor.

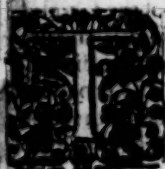
Matthew Pool.

SERMON I.

MATTHEW II. 12.

And from the daies of John the Baptist untill now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

Sermons
Preacht at
Lawrence Turf;
April 22. 1643.
Sermon I.
The Context
opened.



His Text is part of the large commendation that Christ gives of the person and Ministry of John the Baptist. *John* was a cryer in the Wilderness to publish the glory of Christ, and Christ an Herald to proclaim the praise of *John*. And this he doth,

1 For his constancy in the doctrine of Religion, *ver. 7. What went you out to see? a reed shaken with the winde* a light, fickle, and inconstant Prescher, that like a reed turnes with every winde of doctrine? *John* was no such man, not like a reed to yield to the stream or blast of every wind, but like the oake or cedar that stands unmoveably in the midst of the greatest storms.

2 For his holinesse and high measure of mortification, *ver. 8. What went you out to see? A man clothed in soft raiment?* *John* was no such man. He was not at all addicted to the garbe and pompe of the Court, but *He had a raiment of camels hairs, and a leathern girdle about his loines, Mat. 3. 4.*

3 By comparing him with the former Prophets, with those Teachers that went before him, *ver. 9. What went you out to see?*

see?

see? a Prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and more then a Prophet, and ver. 11. Verily, I say unto you, Amongst them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater then John the Baptist. He gives him the precedency above all his predecessors; not in regard of the dignity of his office, but in respect of the peripatency of his doctrine. Yet lest he might be proud himselfe, or others too much admire him, it is added by way of qualification in the end of the 11. verse, *He that is least in the Kingdome of Heaven, is greater then he.* Those Disciples and Apostles that should live after the Resurrection of Christ, (from whence the Gospel or Kingdome of Heaven is dated) should be greater then John, in regard of that full knowledge and clear manifestation they should have of Christ.

4 He commends him for the successfullesse of his Ministry, and that is set forth in the text: *From the daies of John the Baptist, the Kingdome of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force.* A little for the explication of the Text.

By the Kingdome of Heaven] is not meant the glorious seat of the bleis'd Angels, but the Evangelicall state of the Christian Church. (a) It signifies the preaching of the Gospel, and propagation of the Church. (b) It notes that state and condition of the Church which is properly called Christian. The Kingdome of Heaven is in Scripture interpreted a breaking off from the observation of the Ceremoniall Law, and a publishing of the Gospel by John the Baptist, and so it begun when John did first preach the Gospel. And whereas *Matthew* tells us, *Mat. 3. 1* John preached, saying, Repent, for the Kingdome of Heaven is at hand. *Mark* calls this, *The beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Mark 1. 1.* And therefore it is that John is called an Evangelicall Preacher.

Suffereth violence] Violence is not to be taken as it is in our daies of opposition, and as in the daies of persecution; as it is in our daies in opposition to right and justice, and as it was at the first comming in of the Gospel, when the wicked men of the world did go about to oppose and obstruct the publishing of the Gospel; but it is an holy violence, whereby men press forward to obtain the grace of this Kingdome. And so it is generally taken to be an holy violence of affection, or a gracious disposition that

The Text opened.

Cælum Emptum.

(a) Regnum cælorum denotat prædicationem Evangelii, & propagationem Ecclesiæ. *Parvus.*

(b) Regnum Dei significat statum & conditionem Ecclesiæ, quæ proprie Christiana dicitur. *Camero in Mat. 18. 1.*

was implanted and wrought in the hearts of many men in *John Baptists daies.*

Violence is here opposed to lukewarmness and moderation in Religion, to that coldness and frozenness that is in the hearts of men under the preaching of the Word. It is called an holy violence, to distinguish between them that were Christians indeed, and other men; to distinguish them from the Scribes and Pharisees that were cold and frozen under the Ministry of the Gospel. They were so earnest after Christ in the Gospel, that no difficulties or discouragements could take them off from their pursuits after Christ. (c) They were so greedy of Christ, that no force could pluck them away, but they would rather die then be drawn away from the Gospel. It is a metaphor taken from Warriors, who force their passage into a City, and take it by storm, and divide the spoils. The parallel phrase is, *Luke 16.16. Every man presseth into the Kingdom of God.*

For the period of time wherein this violence was declared and expressed, it was in the 15th year of *Tiberius*, as you read, *Luke 3.1.* in the 29th. year of Christ.

Many doctrines may be raised from these words, but I shal not multiply observations. The first and main doctrine is taken from the time wherein this violence was, and the Doctrine is this.

At the first promulgation of the Gospel, the preaching of the Word was more succesfull, multitudes of men did express more holy violence and vehemency of affection towards the service and worship of God, then in any age beside. From the daies of *John the Baptist*, untill now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence. The people were^d cold and frozen under the Ministry of the Scribes and Pharisees, they were heated under the Ministry of *John*.

In the handling of this point two Questions must be answer'd.

1. Whence it came to passe that people were at that time so fervent and affectionate towards the Gospel, that the Gospel was so succesfull then?

2. Whence it comes to pass, that it is no more succesfull now, or why that holy violence is now abated?

1. What are the reasons why it was so succesfull in the daies of *John the Baptist*? In answer, divers reasons may be rendered.

(c) *Adde auidi sunt in nulla vi abstrahi possint, sed potius moriantur quam abstrahantur ab Evangelio.* Luther.

Doctrine.

(d) *Frigebant sub ministerio legis Scribarum & Phariseorum, serviebant sub ministerio Joannis. Muscal.*

Quest. 1. Why, the Gospel so succesfull then,

Reason 1.

Natura hominum
motuatis
avida.

Mark 1.27.

1 Thes. 2.1.

την εἰσοδον
ἡμῶν.

Primum ad-
ventum no-
... Princi-
piis fauebant,
&c.

1. Because of the novelty of the Gospel. New things are most affecting and pleasing to mans nature. This was the ground of the peoples admiration at Christ, *Mark 1.27. They were all amazed, saying, What new doctrine is this? For with authority commandeth he the unclean spirits and they obey him.* We are like to the Athenians, of whom it is written, *Acts 17.21. They spent their time in nothing else but either to tell or hear some new thing.* While *Johns* Ministry was new and fresh, all rejoiced in it, *John 5.35. Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.* And so the Ministry of *Paul* was most successful among the Thessalonians in the beginning of it, *1 Thes. 2.1. You know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain.* It was *Melancthon*s observation, that men were favorers and followers of the Gospel, when it first came into a place.

Reason 2.

Isa. 54.1,2.

2 Another ground of the successfulness of the Gospel at that time, is this: Because the Prophecies of the Old Testament were to be accomplished, both for the extension of the Church, in regard of place and persons, and the intension of affection. 1. For the extension of the Church, in regard of place and persons, That was fore-spoken of in holy Writ, *Isa. 54.1,2. Sing o barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travel with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord. Enlarge the place of thy tents, & let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitations; spare not, lengthen thy cords, & strengthen thy stakes, &c.* Which place is applied by *Paul* to the conversion of the Gentiles upon the first promulgation of the Gospel, *Gal. 4.27.* where he cites the very words of the first Verse now mentioned.

Isa. 2.2.

Another Prophecy of the same nature you have, *Isa. 2.2. It shall come to passe in the last daies, that the mountain of the Lords house, shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it.* Which promise in the same words is repeated, *Micah 4.1.* Another promise of the same nature is, *Is. 60.3,4,5.* and in many other places, which it is needlesse now to mention.

Isa. 60.3,4,5.

Isa. 40.31.

2 There were promises also for the intension of the affections, *Isa. 40.31. They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as Eagles. The Eagle is a bird*

bird of the strongest and highest flight of any that flies in the air. *Zach. 12. 8.* In that day he that is feeble shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God. So *Psal. 110. 3.* It is prophesied of the first bringing in of the Gospel, that *Thy people shall be a willing people in the day of thy power.* And this was to be when God should send forth the rod of his power out of Sion, as it is *ver. 2.* You know what Husbai said of David, *2 Sam. 17. 8.* He and his men were mighty men, and chased in their minds as a Bear robbed of her whelps in the field. And yet he that is feeble shall be as David. Deodate refers this promise to the beginning of the Gospell, and so Cartwright. That is the second reason.

2 Sam. 17. 8.

3 The Lord did this to put a greater glory upon the Gospell, and to raise the estimation of it in the hearts of men: for had the Gospell had but a few converts, and had it had but a little success at the first promulgation of it, the people would not so much have taken notice of it, neither would they so much have admired it, nor so highly esteemed of it, as they did.

Reason 3.

4 This comes to pass because of the perspicuity of the doctrine of the Gospel, above that of the Law. The Gospell came now to be preached to the peoples capacity, more then it was in the time of the Law. Though it is true, that pure Gospel for the substance of it, was preached in the time of the Law, yet not so plainly as in the time of the Gospel. For the Law is nothing else but a dark Gospel, and the Gospel nothing else but a clear Law. The Law was hid and veiled under dark shadowes and ceremonies: But the Gospell was clear and evident. This you have fully set forth, *2 Cor. 3. 15.* When Moses was read, there was a veil upon their hearts, *ver. 16.* and when they turn to the Lord, the veil shall be taken away. And *ver. 18.* But we all with open face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, &c. This is also foretold, *Isa. 30. 26.* at the promulgation of the Gospel, *The light of the Moon shall be as the light of the Sun, and the light of the Sun, shall be seven fold as the light of seven daies, &c.*

Reason 4.

2 Cor. 3. 15.

Isa. 30. 26.

5 Because of that great and glorious liberty which the Gospel instated them in above the Law, I do not mean sensually, but a Christian and holy, a Gospel-liberty. Thus Baptism was appointed in the room of Circumcision. Our Saviour made this proffer, *Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, & I will give*

Reason 5.

Mat. 11. 28.

Acts 15. 10.

you rest, Mar. 11. 28. Which place is not only to be understood of labouring under the burden of sin, but also under the bondage and yoke of the ceremonial Law, under all those costly, painfull and toilsome rites imposed upon them: which were a yoke that neither they nor their fathers were able to bear, as Peter speaks of Circumcision, *Acts 15. 10.* And so you have the reasons for the Gospels success in the daies of *John*. And thus much for the first question.

Quest. 2.

Why the Gospel not so successful now as formerly?

Reasons.

1 In regard of Ministers.

Reason 1.

Luke 1. 16.

The second question is this: How comes it to pass that the Ministry of the word is not so successful now as it was in the daies of the first preaching of it? I answer, many reasons may be given. Some from the Minister, some from the people.

1 In regard of the Minister, and they are five.

1 Because Ministers are not so powerfull in preaching, and exemplary in life as *John* was, *Joh. 5. 35.* *He was a burning and a shining light.* There was his zeale in preaching, there was the holiness of his conversation, *Luke 1. 16.* *And many of the children of Israel shall be turned to the Lord their God, and he shall go before them in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just,* &c. *Naxianzen* said of *Basil*, that he thundered in his doctrine and lightened in his life.

Reason 2.

Mark 1. 13.

2 Ministers preach not the Gospel so purely and perfectly as *John* did, *Mar. 1. 1.* *John* preached the Gospel of *Jesus Christ* *ro. 3.* He preached repentance and remission of sins. Although *John* did bring in the Gospel, yet withall he preached up duties, and not tried down duties, he pressed on duties, and did not cast them off; he did earnestly press on the duties of the moral law, he preached repentance, whereas many ministers now a daies account this but a legall and servile work not fit for Christians under the Gospel to be imployed about, not fit for Ministers to preach, or people to hear. And this is one great reason why men take up such sinfull liberty to follow their own waies and lusts, and by which meanes the Gospel comes to be the les successful. But this you see was far from *Johns* mind and temper; for, said he, *Repent for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand, Mar. 3. 2.* *Ob generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? was our Saviors language, Mar. 23. 33. Jer. 23. 12. but if they had stood*

in.

in my counsel, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings: and ver. 32. Behold, I am against them that prophesie false dreams, saith the Lord, and do talk them, and cause my people to erre by their lies, and by their lightness; yet I sent them not, nor commanded them, therefore they shall not profit this people at all, saith the Lord. 2 Cor. 4. 2. But we have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every mans conscience in the sight of God. It doth enervate and emasculate the power of the Word, to have it mixed with fallshoods. Much truth is preached in the Church of Rome, yet conversion is not ordinarily amongst them, because they adulterate the truth by many errors.

Jer. 23. 32.

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1 Cor. 4. 2.

The Scribes did little good by their preaching, because they did mingle so many ungrounded traditions which they taught without any authority, *Mat. 7. 29. Christ taught as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.*

Mat. 7. 29.

3. Because Ministers preach not so plainly as *John* did, either in matter, method, or manner of expression, 1 Cor. 14. part of the 10th verse, — *Greater is he that propheseth, then he that speaketh with tongues, except he interpret, that the Church may receive edifying.* Many Preachers are like *Heraclitus*, who was call'd the dark Doctor, they affect sublime notions, obscure expressions, unsmooth phrases, not making difficult truths plain, but plain truths difficult, they darken counsel by words without knowledge, *Job 38. 2*

Reason 3.

1 Cor. 14. 5.

4. Because Ministers preach not so methodically as *John* did, *Mat. 3. 2. John* preached, saying, *Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand; Mark* saith, the Gospel began with *Johns* Ministry, *Mat. 1. 1.* and his doctrine began with repentance. Men take up other methods now adays, and so prove unsuccessfull.

Job 38. 2.

Reason 4.

Mat. 3. 2.

5. Because there is not that harmony among Ministers now, that was formerly. *John* preached what the Prophets taught, and Christ trod in *Johns* steps, and the Apostles exactly agreed with, and continued in the doctrine of their predecessors. But now in our time Ministers are divided; one preacheth one thing, another preacheth another thing; and this doth very much trouble the mindes of people, and makes many stumble at the

Reason 5.

2 In regard of
the people.

Reason 1.
Mat. 21. 26.

1 Thef. 2. 13.

Mat. 21. 25, 26.

John 10. 41.

*Miracula non
sunt multipli-
canda sine ne-
cessitate.*

1 Cor. I. 22.

1 Cor. 14. 22.

2 Cor. 12. 12.

Reason 2.

Word, and so the Gospel proves unsuccessfull.

2 This comes to pass from the people, & that for four reasons.

1 People do more question the office and calling of the Ministry now, then they did question *Johns*, *Mat. 21. 26.* — *All men hold John as a Prophet* The reason why *Pauls* Ministry was ineffectuall to many *Corinthians*, was this; because they questioned his calling, and therefore he labours to vindicate his Apostolicall authority all along the Epistle. This doth take off that awe and majesty that should be in men to the Word. As on the contrary, the reason why the Ministry of *Paul* was to effectuall to the *Thessalonians*, was this; *Because when they received the Word of God, they received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe,*

1 Thef. 2. 13. I know that some question the lawfulness of our Ministry upon this ground, because miracles do not attend our preaching, as they did at the first promulgation of the Gospel. But this is no just reason, and (that I may remove this obstacle of the success of the Gospel) I shall by the way briefly disprove it.

1 *John* had his calling from heaven, *Mat. 21. 25, 26.* and yet *John* did no miracle, *John 10. 41.*

2 Miracles are not necessary now, as they were at the first planting of the Gospel. There was more need of miracles then, that the people might give attendance to the Ministry in those daies. The *Jews* require a sign, 1 Cor. 1. 22. 1 Cor. 14. 22. *Figures are for a sign not to them that believe, but to them that believe not, but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.*

3 Miracles were signs of the Apostleship, but not of the Ministry, 2 Cor. 12. 12. *The signs of an Apostle were wrought among you in signs and wonders, and mighty deeds.* *Timothy* and *Titus* could work no miracles, yet no man doubts of their authority. So that want of miracles doth not at all invalidate the authority of the Ministry. So I have removed the first impediment of the success of the Gospel in our daies.

That is the first Reason.

The long continuance of the Word makes it unsuccessfull, (such is the corruption of mens hearts) The nature of man is for new things, and in tract of time the love of men to the Word is eaten

out; whereas at the first, people flocked to the Gospel, as Doves to the windowes, yet afterward they grew carelesse and negligent in Gods Ordinances. Manna at first was loved, but afterwards it cloied the Israelites, and they loathed it. Many men are Christ and Gospel-gluttons.

Another reason is, because Discipline is not joined with Doctrine. The Church is the garden of God, the Doctrine is the flowers of this garden, Discipline is the hedge. Neither Christ nor *John* the Baptist by their coming would destroy the government of the Church among the Jews, and when that was taken down, Christ set up another in his stead. Now look, as it is in a State, the intervals of government breed many State-heresies, if I may so call them, mutinies, factions, and parties among the people, interrupting the peace of the Land: So it is in the Church, when the reins of government are let loose, in come errors and disorders; and the good seed is choaked by that meanes.

Reason 3.

4 This comes to passe from the dis-use of family duties. The reason why the reformation succeeded so well in *Germany*, was because the peoples catechizing went along with *Luthers* preaching. It was laid as a charge upon Masters of families, that they should catechize their children, *Deut. 6. 6, 7.* And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, &c.

Reason 4.

Deut. 6. 6, 7.

People do not back the Ministers preaching of the Word with this duty of prayer, that God would sanctifie the Word preached to their souls, and make it succesfull. It is an observable passage which you find, *Mar. 4. 24.* Take heed what you hear; for with what measure you mete it shall be measured to you, and unto you that hear shall more be given. Sometimes this expresseion is referred to rash judgement, as *Mat. 7. 2.* sometimes to works of mercy, but here it is used as an argument to stir up people to prepare their hearts for the hearing of the Word with care and conscience. For if it be your care to fit your selves for the Word, and to settle it in your hearts, and practise it in your lives, God will then measure the same back into you by his blessing of the Word, to the salvation and edification of your souls: whereas the neglect of this duty is a great cause why the Word is not so succesfull now, as it was formerly.

The

The second Sermon.

MATTHEW II. 12.

And from the dayes of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdome of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.



THE doctrinall part being finished, I now come to application.

And this Doctrine may be usefull in five respects:
1 For reproofe. 2 For comfort. 3 For instruction. 4 For caution. 5 To stir up our lamentation.

Use 1.

1 This will reprove severall sorts of persons. Out of this Quiver I may draw ten arrowes of reproofe, that may pierce into the hearts of ten severall sorts of men.

Reproofe 1.

1 It reproveth those who are violent in the waies of sinne, & put forth themselves to the utmost, and draw out their strength in waies of wickednes: that like those in *Jer. 8. 6.* *They turned their backs, as the horse rusheth into the battle; as an horse that is so fierce in the war, that he rusheth into it without fear of danger: So the Spirit of God setteth forth the wickedness of men's hearts; by nature they rush into sin, not considering what they do, as the horse. See what Job saith concerning the horse, Job 39. 19. Hast thou given the horse strength? Hast thou clothed his neck with thunder? ver. 20. Canst thou make him afraid as a Grasshopper? Is the glory of his nostrils terrible. ver. 21. He paweth in the wallie, and rejoiceth in his strength, he goeth on to meet the armed men, ver. 22. He mocketh at fear, he is not affrighted, neither turneth he back from the sword, ver. 23. He saith among the trumpets, alah, alah, and he smelleth the barrel of a spear off, the thunder of the Captaine, and shooting. Even in this manner do wicked men rush into wickedness; no fear, nor wit can restrain them; no dangers, nor threatenings either from God or man can keep them in, *Jer. 2. 23. They**

Jer. 8. 6.

Jer. 2. 23.

are as a swift Dromedary traversing her ways. Their course is evil, and their force is not right, *Ier. 23. 10.* Their hearts are fully set in them to do evil. *Ecc. 8. 11.* They weary themselves to commit iniquity, *Ier. 9. 5.* The people labor in the fire, & weary themselves for very vanity, *Hab. 2. 13.* They sleep not except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away, except they cause some to fall, *Prov. 4. 16.*

Eccles. 8. 11.

Hab. 2. 13.

Prov. 4. 16.

2 This reproves those that instead of an holy violence, are guilty of tumultuous violence, that by force and power disturb humane societies, destroying Lawes and Government, that doe as *Antiochus* did, *Dan. 7. 25.* He spoke great words against the most High, and wore out the Saints of the most High, and thought to change times and lawes.

Dan. 7. 25.

3 This reproves those that instead of an holy violence, are guilty of oppressing violence, which is the sin chiefly of rich men, *Mic. 6. 12.* For the rich men thereof are full of violence. It is they that grinde the faces of the poor, *Mic. 2. 2.* They cover fields, and take them by violence, and houses, and take them away, and so they oppress a man and his house, *Amos 3. 10.* They know not to do right, who store up violence and robbery in their palaces, *Pro. 4. 17.* They eat the bread of wickedness, and drink wine of violence.

Micah 6. 12.

Micah 2. 2.

Amos 3. 10.

Prov. 4. 17.

4 This reproves those who are eager and violent in their pursuits after the things of this life, but not so after spiritual things; we are all upon the spur, all upon the wing after the world; here is violence upon violence, labour upon labor for these things which we may have, and yet be never the better; and want them, and yet be never the worse. Covetous men are said to *pant after the dust of the earth.* So eager are they in their pursuit after the world, as if they were almost out of breath, *Psal. 59. 6. 14.* They return at evening, they make a noise like a dog, and go about the City. No creature is so sensible of hunger as a dog. Covetous men are like dogs towards the world, as if they were made up all of desires, but towards the things of eternity, we are as if we were all Stoicks, and had no passions in us. As hot as fire for earth, and as cold as any ice for heaven. Oh how many pant after the earth, who have no breathing after heaven!

Amos 2. 7.

Psal. 59. 6, 14.

Ferventissimi in terrenis, frigidissimi in celestibus.

5 This reproves those who are violent opposers of the Gospel: As the former may be called a worldly violence, so this may

Acts 26. 11.

be called a persecuting violence. Such was the violence of *Paul* before his conversion, *Acts 26 11. I punished them oft in every Synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme, and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange Cities.* The Scribes and Pharisees are said to be filled with madnesse against Christ, after the miracle was wrought in curing the man with the withered hand, *Luke 6. 11.* There are some that understand my Text of this persecuting violence; This is called a *rage reaching up to heaven, 2 Chron. 28. 9.*

Luke 6 11.

2 Chron. 28. 9.

Acts 2. 13.

6 This reproves such, who account an holy zeal and violence in the waies of Religion, to be onely a furious frenzy. Such were they, *Acts 2. 13.* that said, *These men are filled with new wine,* when the Apostles were zealous in the preaching of the Gospel. Such were the friends of Christ, when he was zealous and fervent in the doing of his Fathers wil, and so intent upon it, that he had no leisure to eat his meat, *They went to lay hold of him, for they said, He is beside himself, Mark 3. 21.* The like censure did *Festus* pass on *Paul*, when he was zealous to win men to the Gospel; he said, *thou art beside thy self, much learning doth make thee mad, Acts 26.*

Mark 3. 21.

Acts 26. 24.

24 *Basil*, when he was passionately eager against the *Arrian Heresie*, it was interpreted a symptome of his dotage. If men will not be bled out of their Religion, Reformation, &c. they are esteemed but furious Zealots, men of violent spirits. Thus it is said with zealous *Paul*, *2 Cor. 5. 13. Whether we are beside our selves, it is to God, or whether we be sober, it is for your cause.*

2 Cor. 5. 13.

Nullum violentum est perpetuum.

7 This reproves those who were once violent and zealous in Religion, but now their zeal is abated. We have a Proverb: *Nothing that is violent is durable*; if the violent motion proceeds from some external artificial cause, and not from a rooted stirring principle within. Many that go in the waies of God merely from an externall principle, it may be credit or profit, though they may be seemingly violent for a time. yet their violence will not last, they will not be stedfast in the waies of Religion, and in a Christian course. Some who have flourished in the Spring, have had a withering time, their fruit decayed, as the leaves fall off in Autumn. It may be said of many in regard of their souls, as it was said of *David* in regard of his body. *When he was old, and stricken in years, they covered him with cloaths, & he gat no heat, 1 Kin. 1. 1.*

1 Kings 1. 1.

Many,

Many, though they are plied with Ordinances, can get no heat in them. *Augustine* observes it of many in his daies, that would at their first conversion, pray frequently, and live holily, but after a while they would grow more remisse, and pray more coldly and slightly then they did before. There are few of whom after a long profession of religion it can be said, as was said of *Moses*, *Deut. 34. 7.* His eye was not dim, nor his naturall force abated. Many are like *Asa*, their end is worse then their beginning.

Deut. 34. 7.

8 This reproves those who content themselves with moderation in the matters of Religion, that account a dram of zeal enough for a talent of discretion, as Mr *Greenham* said. Many men are of an opinion, that Religion is dangerous, and that an holy violence in Religion is attended with troubles and dangers, and therefore it is best to be moderate in Religion. There are many of these men in our daies, otherwise Religion had never come to so low an ebb as now it is. It was the saying of one, that men may be religious, but then they must not be too zealous: they must not be too violent for the waies of God, for then they are called men of hot and furious spirits: Men it seems must not love Religion too much. *Amama* quotes *Tarnovius*, who mentions a sort of men that brought in an opinion, which he calls a new Gospel, that if a man performe the externall duties of Religion, if he go to the Church, hear the Word, Pray, &c. it was sufficient for salvation. Of this temper *Gallio* was, *Acts 18. 17.* *Gallio cared for none of those things.* A little Religion will serve the turn. Most of the Statists and Politicians of this world, are of this temper, which God will one day account a Laodicean lukewarmness, or timorous cowardize. Geographers, who write of the situation of *England*, say, that it is between the Torrid and Frigid Zone, neither hot nor cold: I wish our hearts were not like our land.

Acts 18. 17.

9 This reproves those that expresse more violence outwardly, then they have inwardly.

There are many men that will hear Sermons on Lords daies, and Lectures on week-daies, speak well of Religion, and of the waies and people of God, but if you look to them in their families, and in their closets, you shall find them of another temper. These men are like pepper, hot in the mouth, but cold in the stomach. I may resemble such to a pot boiling over the fire, hot at

the top, cold at the bottom. So some men are boiling hot in the mouth, but their hearts are cold and frozen. As it is with men sick of a Feaver, the face and hands, and other externall parts of the body burn, when the heart shakes and quivers with cold.

1. This reproves those who all their life remain dull and sluggish in Religion, that like Carriers horses, keep their ordinary pace, they will not go beyond their baiting place, they are like Dromedaries, swift in the waies of sin, but like the dull As, slow in the waies of God. The firstling of other beasts was to be offered to God, but not the firstling of an As, *Exod. 13. 13. And every firstling of an As thou shalt redeem with a Lamb, and if thou wilt not redeem it, thou shalt break its neck;* to note that of sluggish and dull hearts, the very best services are not acceptable to God. The Snail is reckoned among the unclean creatures, *Lev. 11. 30.* Those hearts that are of this dull constitution, are impure and odious in the sight of God And thus much shall serve by way of reproof.

2. This Doctrine is usefull for comfort; and that, 1 To Ministers. 2 To hearers.

1 To Ministers; and that for three Reasons.

1 Though here is matter of trouble, yet no fear of guilt, if thou discharge thy duty faithfully, though not successfully. *Ezek. 3. 19. If thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but thou hast delivered thy soul.* *Acts 20. 26.* when Paul had used his utmost endeavour at Ephesus, he vindicates himselfe thus; *I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men.* *Acts 18. 6.* when Paul preached to the Jewes, and they would not obey the Gospel, *He shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads, I am clean from henceforth I will go to the Gentiles.* Though a Minister doth all his daies plough the rocks, and sow the sands, & spend his strength in vain, yet this will bring no guilt upon a Ministers conscience: for though it be the Ministers duty to preach the Word, yet it is Gods work to convert the soul.

2 God rewards Ministers according to their labour, not success, *2 Cor. 2. 13. For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ to them that are saved, and in them that perish.*

The father paies the Nurse, though the child die. The Apothecaries bill must be paid, though the patient die: So God will re-

ward

Exod. 13. 13.

Levit. 11. 30.

Use 2.

For comfort.
1 To Ministers for three Reasons.
Ezek. 3. 13.

Acts 20. 26.

Acts 18. 6.

2 Cor. 2. 15.

ward Ministers, though success be not answerable to their endeavors, *Isa. 49. 4. Then I said, I have laboured in vain and spent my strength for nought and in vain, yet surely my judgement is with the Lord, and my work with my God; or the reward of my work.*

Isa. 49. 4.

3 The Word may live in the hearers hearts when the Minister is dead, *John 4. 36, 37. He that reapeth, receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal, that both he that soweth, & he that reapeth, may rejoice together.* And herein is that saying true, *One soweth, another reapeth.* As a wicked man doth hurt after his death, so a good man doth good, *2 Kin. 23. 19. Jeroboams wickedness proved a snare to Israel in the daies of Josiah, which was 360 years after his death. And Davids example did good on Josiah 400 years after, 2 Kin. 22. 2. Josiah did that which was right in the sight of the Lord and walked in all the ways of David his father.*

John 4. 36, 37.

2 Kings 23. 19.

2 Kings 22. 2.

2 As here is comfort for Ministers, so also here is comfort to hearers, and that for three Reasons.

Comforts to hearers for three Reasons.

1 God never expected all should attain the same measure of grace. Although *Luke 8. 8. the seed that fell in the good ground is said to beare an hundred fold, yet, Mat. 13. 23. the grounds differed, and some brought forth but sixty, some but thirty,* Christ hath Lambs in his fold as well as sheep, Babes in his house, as well as strong men.

Luke 8. 8.

Mat. 13. 23.

2 It may be what is wanting in a sudden and short violence, is made up in solidity. Oakes grow not so fast as the Willow-trees, but they grow more solidly.

3 God will cherish the smallest beginnings of good in the hearts of his people, *Cant. 7. 12. Let us go up early to the Vineyards, let us see if the Vine flourish, whether the tender Grape appear, the Pomegranates bud forth, there will I give thee my loves.* The Lord Jesus took notice not only of the strong and grown Grapes, but also of the tender Grapes, not only of the fruit, but of the buddings. The very buddings of grace are accepted. And how should this comfort weak Christians, and encourage them to increase with the increase of God, and to get more of this holy violence in heavenly things? *Mat. 12. 20. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoking flax he will not quench, till he send forth judgement into victory.* He speaks there of new converts holy desires, and gracious resolutions in a poor soul; though they do but

Cant. 7. 2.

smoke, and not burn, yet Jesus Christ will not quench them till he have brought forth judgment to victory, by which he means, till they come to be perfect men and women in Christ Jesus.

The third Sermon.

MATTHEW II. 12.

And from the daies of John the Baptist untill now the Kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

Use 3.
Instruction.



In the third place, this doctrine may serve for instruction touching severall things.

- 1 The nature of this holy violence.
- 2 The necessity of it.
- 3 The discovery of it.

4 The differences betwixt an heady and holy violence.

1 What is the nature of this violence.

Quest. 1 If you ask what is the nature of this holy violence?

Answer, 1 It is a full and vehement bent of a mans desires, affections and endeavours after Jesus Christ in the Gospel; so that no difficulties or discouragements whatsoever, shall take him off from his pursuit after Christ, in the way of his Ordinances.

2 The necessity of it.

2 For the necessity of it, that appears in five regards. 1 In regard of God. 2 In regard of our selves. 3 In respect of the Devil. 4. In respect of other men. 5. In respect of Heaven it selfe.

1 In regard of God.

1 In regard of God, *Eccles. 9. 10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might.* God requires this at your hands, *Rom. 12. 11. Not slothful in businesse, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord.* The word signifies boiling in spirit.

Rom. 12. 11.
τὸ πνεῦμα ζέοντα.
boiling in spirit.
2 In respect of our selves.

2 In regard of our selves, and that for two Reasons.

1 We have violent temptations against us, our affections must be equall to our temptations; if our affections be not violent, how can we resist violent temptations? Shall not we be as violent to save our souls, as the Devill is to damn them? Sathan invades the soul with fierce and furious assaults.

2 We

2 We have been violent in the waies of sin: Shew as much violence in the waies of God as you can, and when you have done all, it will come short of your former violence in the waies of sin, *Rom. 6. 19. As ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity: even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.* There are three To's in the expression of the service of sin, to uncleanness, to iniquity, and unto iniquity, but in the service of God, there are onely two To's, to righteousness, and unto holiness. To note that we were more addicted to sin formerly, then now we are to grace; the reason is, then there was nothing but sin in the soule, now there is something else besides grace, a stream of corruption to oppose it. We ought to be as violent in good, as in evill: the same word which signifies to persecute, *Acts 26. 11.* is used to set out his earnest pressing towards heaven, *Phil. 3. 14.*

Rom. 6. 19.

3 In regard of the Devill. He hath violent temptations and suggestions, *1 Pet. 5. 8. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring Lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour.* 1 He is said to be an adversary. Now an adversary will watch all opportunities for your hurt, and will be intently set upon it. 2. He is a Lion, not a Lambe; a Lion, a savage, fierce, and furious creature. 3. He is not asleep, but a roaring Lion. 4. Not a Lion standing still, contented with the prey when he hath gotten it, but still going about for more: he is not contented with what he hath gotten, though he hath been going about ever since *Adams* fall, yet he goes about still for more, he labours to fill hell with soules. 5 He seeks whom he may devour. The Devill watcheth, and doest thou sleep?

Acts 26. 11.

1 Pet. 5. 8.

Phil. 3. 14.

3 In respect of the Devill.

1 *Pet. 5. 8.*

4 In regard of other men, and those either bad or good.

1 In regard of bad men.

1 Consider, they are violent against the truth, and wilt thou be as eager and violent in the profession of the Gospel, ot they are in their oppositions against it? As *Zeno* said to one of his acquaintance, who was enticed to bear false witness against a his ther, and walked privately, because he would avoid the man sought to suborn him. Oh, said *Zeno*, shall he not be ashamed that sin, and wilt thou be ashamed to set thy selfe against sin? d of

2 Bad men rage and are violent in the waies of wickedness:

Wicked

Vigilat diabolus & tu dormis?

In respect of other men;

1 Bad men;

Wicked men are as swift as Dromedaries in the waies of sin, and wilt thou be as a dull Ass in the service of God? Shall a man run fast in a way of sin to destroy his soule, and will you but creep in the waies of God to save your soul? Shall wicked men run post to hell, and wilt thou but creep slowlie to heaven? Shall a man make speed to the place of execution, and wilt thou but move slowly towards a crown and throne? Shall wicked men not be ashamed to shew their rage in a sinfull courle, and shal godly men be ashamed to be zealous in the waies of God? *Jer. 8.6.* They turn to their courle, as the horse rusheth into the battell. *Jer. 9.5.* They weary themselves to commit iniquity, and will not you do as much for God, as they do for Satan?

Jer. 8. 6.

וּפְרִיט מִרְבֵּי
irruit more in-
undantis aquae.
2 In regard of
good men.

Numb 14. 24.

וַיִּשְׁלַח
וַיִּרְאֵהוּ
Implevit me
post me, He
went after me
with full saile.

2 In regard of good men. How eager and earnest are they after God? *Caleb* and *Joshua* followed God fully, *Numb. 14. 24.* when hypocrites follow God partially and by halves, *Psal. 132. 4.5.* *David* was so violent for God, that he would give no sleepe to his eyes, nor slumber to his eye-lids, untill he found out a place for the Lord, as habitation for the mighty God of *Jacob*. As on the contrary, those wicked men, *Prov. 4. 16.* were so violent in wickednesse, that they could not sleep except they caused some to fall, *Psal. 69. 9.* The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, and the reproaches of them that reproached thee, fell upon me.

5 In regard of
Heaven it self.
אֵינִי יָדָעָה
more pugilum
certate.

5 In respect of heaven it self, *Luke 13. 24.* Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, wil seek to enter in, and shall not be able. Strive to an agony, or as in an agony men strive for life: it is not enough to seek; many seekers shall never find, but there must be striving; there must be a kinde of holy impatieney to get into heaven, *1 Cor. 9. 24. 25.* Know ye not that they which run in a race, run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run that ye may obtaine. And every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible Crown but we an incorruptible. *2 Tim. 2. 5.* And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned except he strive lawfully. Heaven is compar'd to a hill, and hel to a pit. It will cost a man sweat and labour to get up an hill, but it is an easie thing to go down into a pit. Heaven is as *Canaan* (the type of it) was, though a land of promise, yet of conquest too. There were many Giants there, the sons of *Anak* in the land. Heaven is not had without eagernesse, *Luk. 16. 16.* Eve-

2 Tim. 2. 5.
Facilis descen-
sus Avernii.
Virgil.

βίη ἐστὶν
παρεὺς.

ry man presseth into it. It is an allusion to Souldiers that storm a City or strong Garrison with all the speed and violence they can. Should Souldiers go about that great work in a marching place, they might all be cut off. And thus much shall suffice for the second thing, to shew the necessity of this holy violence.

The third thing is the discovery of this holy violence.

Now it is discovered by these following marks. A violent or zealous person is one,

1 Who is patient in his own cause, but impatient in Gods cause. This was the temper of *David*. What the enemies did to *David*, was but as a pin in the flesh, but what they did against God, was as a sword in his bones. *Psal. 42. 10. As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproached me, whilst they say daily unto me, Where is thy God?* the reproaching of God was as death to him, as though he had been slain by it, as *slaying in my bones. Moses* was a man very meek in his own wrongs, *Num. 12. 3. Moses was very meeke above all the men that were upon the face of the earth;* but in the cause of God, *Exod. 32.* he carried himselfe as if he had been a man made up all of passion, he broke the tables of stone. So *Jesus Christ* was famous for his gentleness, he was a Lamb for meekness, and yet in the cause of his Father, he applied that to himself; *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up, Job. 2. 17.*

2 He never thinks that he began to serve God soon enough, or did him work enough, *Psa. 63. 1. Early will I seek thee, and ver. 8. My soul followeth hard after God. Acts 13. 22. God gave David this testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my wil. Ps. 119. 6. then shall I not be ashamed when I have respect to all thy commandments.*

3 He is desirous to glorifie God by suffering as well as by doing, to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes; to the wilderness, as well as to Paradise; to a Prison, as well as to a Palace, *Jer. 2. 2. I remember the kindnesse of thy youth, — when thou wast after me in a land that was not sown. Cant. 8. 5. Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved, from the wilderness of afflictions? Mat. 8. 19. A certain Scribe came to him, and said, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. He would follow Christ in doing, but not in suffering, as cloth*

3 The discovery of this violence.

ברוך
השם
נאמן
Numb. 12. 3.

Exod. 32.

John 2. 17.

Psal. 63. 1.

Acts 13. 22.

Psal. 119. 6.

Jer. 2. 2.

Cant. 8. 5.

Mat. 8. 19.

doth last in wearing, but shrink in wetting; for when Christ told him, *The foxes have holes; the birds of the air nests, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head, v. 20.* his courage was abated.

4 He looks more after duty than reward, and complains more of his defect in it, than for want of unexpected returns to it. Many men are contented to follow God, so long as there is any advantage in so doing; they will do their duty, but they do not care for duty, but upon expectation of rewards. Remiss spirits follow God, as a dog doth his Master, till he comes by a carrion, then he leaves his Master, and turns aside to it: So wicked men follow God till they come at a carrion, till they meet with some stinking lust, some occasion or object of sin, but then they depart from God, and close with it. But on the contrary, *David* followed after God, and thirsted for God, even then when he was in a dry and thirsty land, where no water was, *Psal. 63. 1.* Had we been in *David's* case, we should have said, O Lord give me drink; had we been a barren land, we should have said, O Lord give me food: but *David* in a barren and thirsty land, cries, O Lord, give me thy selfe. That is the spirit of a man that is truly zealous after the Gospell.

5 Difficulties and opposition do rather quicken than abate his endeavours; What adventures will he not make? What pains will he not take? What hazards will he not run for God? And as it is with fire in the smiths forge, that growes hotter and more violent when the water is sprinkled upon it, or as fire burns the most vehemently in a cold and frosty day: So that opposition that is made against a zealous man doth but make it the more eager and fervent by a holy *Amperissafis*. Thus it was in the daies of Christ, the harder it was to get to him, the more violent and restless were they till they came to him, *They trod one upon another, being an innumerable multitude of people, Luke 12. 1.* Some forced their passage to Christ (as we say hunger doth to meat) through stone wals, *Mat. 23. 4.* And when they could not come nigh unto Christ for the presse, they uncovered the roof where he was, and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed, &c. Such was the temper of that Syrophenician, whose zeale was not quenched but increased by opposition, though even Christ did set himselfe against her as an adversary; When Christ said, *It is not meet to*
take

Psal. 63. 1.

Luke 12. 1.

Mark 2. 4.

take the childrens bread and give it to dogs, Mar. 7. 27. Here is cold water (one would think) enough to quench the zeal of many a professor, but the fire of her zeal made fuell of this cooling expreffion; *She answered, yet the dogs under the table eat of the childrens crumbs, ver. 28.* One compares a violent Christian to a Bur, the more pains you take to get it off, it sticks the faster on: So a zealous Christian, the more you endeavour to pull him from God, he cleaves the clofer to him. This was *Dauids* disposition, when he danced before the Lord, when *Michal* despised him, and reproved him, and fell foul upon him for it; he answers, *I will yet be more vile then thou, and will be bafe in mine own fight, for it was before the Lord, 2 Sam 6. 21, 22.* And thus much for the third particular, the discovery of this holy violence. I now come to the fourth.

Mark. 7. 27.

Verse 28.

2 Sam 6. 21. 22.

The fourth particular is the difference betwixt an heady and rash, and an holy and religious violence. Now I shall shew that in ten particulars.

4 The difference between a rash and a holy violence.

1 It is most seen in triviall and circumstantiall matters. Such was the violence of the Pharisees, about washing their vessels & their hands before meat, but they never lookt after the washing of the heart. So the Prelatical party shewed much heat and violence about ceremonies, whereas they were lukewarm, yea cold in more substantiall matters, the observation of the Sabbath, and the strict exercise of holinesse, &c. They were very violent for the linnen Ephod, though it may be there was a leprous skin under it; they took great care to have rails about the Communion table, but never took care to make a rail to keep prophane persons from the profanation of the Sacrament; but now a godly man is most conversant about that which may be most advantageous to him, which will bring him neereff heaven, which will be of most use to him to glorifie God, and to save his soul.

2. It is kindled by passion and vain glory in the one, by a zeal and holy indignation in the other. Thus many men are zealous in the broaching of errors; when they cannot get glory by holding the truth, then they will give up themselves to vent errors. Whereas true violence comes from a better principle, and aims at an higher end. The fire of the Altar was to come from heaven, *Levit. 9. 24.* And when *Nadab* and *Abihu* offered sacrifice with

Levit. 9. 24.

strange fire, it was not accepted, nay, they were slain in their enterprize. Our zeal should be a fire from heaven. God accounts that strange fire we fetch from our own hearts.

1 Sam. 13. 13.

Verse 11, 12.

3 Violent rash zeal, makes a man goe beyond the bounds of his place and calling. *Samuel* reprov'd *Saul* for his heady violence, 1 Sam. 13. 13. When *Saul* had taken upon him to offer sacrifice, *Samuel* said, *Thou hast done foolishly*. Yet *Saul* pleaded a fair excuse, ver. 11, 12 *Saul* said, *Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and thou comest not within the daies appointed, and that the Philistines gathered themselves together to Michmash, therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the Lord, I forced my selfe therefore, and offered a burnt offering.*

Mat. 26. 51.

You see *Saul* had much to say, yet all would not serve to justify his invasion into the Priests office. Such was the violence of *Peter*, Mat. 26. 51 *He stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and strook a servant of the High Priest, and cut off his eare.* But an holy violence makes a man zealous in his place. A zealous Magistrate will severely punish sin, let other Justices indolge it. A zealous Minister will be faithfull and fervent in reprovng of sin, though others prove dumb dogs, or flatterers that sow pillows under mens elbowes. So a zealous Master of a family resolves with good *Joshua*, that he and his house wil serve the Lord, Josh. 24. 15. whatever other Masters and other Families do. Fire in its place is good and useful, but out of its place how hurtfull and destructive?

Joshua 24. 15.

The fourth Sermon.

MATTHEW II. 12.

And from the daies of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

4 **A**N heady violence is more eager at first then at the latter end. This difference the Philosopher puts between naturall and

and violent motions, that naturall motions are slow at the beginning, but swifter when they come neereſt to their journeyes end; as a falling ſtone moves very ſlow when it firſt begins to fall, but faſter when it comes neerer its centre. On the contrary, violent motions are ſwifter in the beginning, ſlower in the concluſion. As an arrow ſhot out of a bow, moves exceeding ſwiftly at the firſt, but after ward flags and grows remiſs, untill at laſt the motion of it ceaſe. An heady violence is like the violent motion, ſwift at firſt, ſlow afterward: But contrarily, an holy violence is like a naturall motion, that acts with more vigour in the end, than in the beginning. This was the commendation of the Church of *Thyatira*, *That her laſt works were more then her firſt*, *Rev. 2. 19.*

5. Headly violence will be diſcouraged in Religion by ſmall difficulties. Such was the violence of that man fore-mentioned, that was earneſt to come to Chriſt, but when Chriſt told him, *The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have neſts, but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head*, *Mat. 8. 20.* his zeal was abated. But an holy violence is quickned, not abated by oppoſition, *Job 32. 19. Behold, my belly is as wine which hath no vent, it is ready to burſt like new bottles.*

Mat. 8. 10.

Job 32. 19.

6 An heady violence is led more by example, then rule, like that violence of the people of *Ephesus* for *Diana*, *Acts 19. 32.* Some cried one thing, and ſome another, and the moſt part knew not wherefore they were come together. Such was the violence of the Scribes and Pharisees, *Job. 7. 47, 48, 49. then answered him the Pharisees, Are you alſo deceived? Have any of the Rulers or of the Pharisees beleeved on him? But this people who know not the Law, are curſed.* But an holy violence is led by Scripture-rule, not by popular example. The word was the rule that guided *Joſhua* to that reſolution, *That he and his houſe would ſerve the Lord.*

Acts 19. 32.

7 One that hath this heady violence is moſt buſied with controverſials and circumſtantials in Religion. Thus *Saul* was violent againſt the eating of the blood of the ſacrifices, yet made no conſcience of ſhedding the blood of fourſcore and five of the Priests of the Lord: But an holy violence makes a man converſant in the practicals of Chriſtianity, *Tim. 2. 14. The people of God are a people zealous of good works.* There was leſs of the power of Religion in thoſe times wherein the Schoolmen moſt flouriſhed,

Tim. 2. 14.

and the heat of mens spirits was spent in curious and frivolous speculations; while they that should have instructed the people turn'd disputants, the poor multitude became Atheists. It was an heady violence betwixt the Eastern and Western Churches, touching the time of the observation of *Easter*, when many other truths of God that lay a bleeding were neglected, and they did not contend earnestly for many of the doctrines of faith, that was once delivered to the Saints. So many men among us spend all their time about notions and disputes, and this hath proved a very canker to eat out the power of godliness. In the City of *Mogera* there was a great contention between two men, which of them should stand in the shadow of an *Als* upon a Sun-shine day. Such was the violence of *Paul* before his conversion, *Gal. I. 14.* He was exceeding zealous for the traditions of his fathers.

8 An heady violence is an uneven violence, there is no uniformity in it; it is a violence against some sins, not all; it is for some duties, not others; to act some graces, but not all. Such was the violence of *Jehu*. He was very hot and violent against the Priests and worship of *Baal*, *2 Kin. 10. 28.* *Jehu* destroyed *Baal* out of *Israel*: But *Jehu* departed not from the sins of *Jeroboam*, which made *Israel* to sin, *ver. 31.* Such was the violence of *Saul* for sacrifice, but not for obedience. But now an holy violence is uniform, it carries a man out against every sin, for every duty, it makes a man to walk in all the commandments of God.

9 This heady violence will make a man disturb humane societies, and civil government, anticipate authority: But an holy violence, though violent towards God, yet is quiet and peaceable towards men, though he pursue heaven with violence, yet he lives in the earth with meekness & quietness. Those ancient hereticks were such as did despise government, presumptuous self-willed, and were not afraid to speak evil of dignities. But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, &c.

10 Heady violence is accompanied with stoutness of heart both towards God and men, it proceeds from a naturall rashness. But holy violence is accompanied with humiliation, *Rev. 3. 19.*

The Church of *Laodicea* is commanded to be zealous, and repent. Their zeal for God must be joined with the breaking of their own hearts. So the zeal of the Corinthians, *2 Cor. 7. 13.* was

Gal. I. 14.

2 Kings 10. 28

Verse 31.

2 Pet. 2. 10.

James 3. 17.

Rev. 3. 19.

2 Cor. 7. 11.

accompanied with a godly sorrow, with fear, with indignation against themselves, with revenge. And thus much shall suffice for the fourth particular, and last branch of the Use of instruction; namely, the difference between heady and holy violence. And so much for the third Use.

4 The fourth Use is for caution, and that in four particulars, 1 Take heed of pleading for, or being contented with a moderation in matters of Religion. Moderation in Religion is accounted a virtue in these times, whereas Jesus Christ would have spued us out of his mouth. If Jesus Christ commend an holy violence in the matters of Religion, what becomes of this moderation? Indeed, for men to be moderate in things that are lawful, is good. It is the advice of the Apostle, *Phil. 4. 5. Let your moderation be known unto all men the Lord is at hand*: that is, let your moderation be in the love and desire of things lawful and indifferent, of things in this world, be moderate in those things, that they may not hinder you in your course towards Heaven, but not in any case to be moderate in Religion; and that I shall make appear in these four particulars.

Use 4.
For caution in
four things.

Phil. 4. 5.

1 Moderate estates do not content you in the world. *Men rise up early, and go to bed late, and eat the bread of carefulness*, and are eager and indefatigable in their pursuits of the world. If you get not so much this year, you will endeavour to get more the next year; no man hath moderation after the things of this world, no man is contented with that estate they are in, but labours to improve it. Like the Chaldeans, of whom it is spoken, *Hab. 2. 5. He enlargeth his desire as hell, and is as death, and cannot be satisfied: But gathereth unto him all Nations, and heapeth unto him all people*. And is it reason that you that are so immoderate in the pursuit and desire of the things of this world, should be moderate in the things of heaven?

Hab. 2. 5.

2. You have been very immoderate in your desires after your lusts before your conversion, and therefore in all reason you should not now be moderate in your desires after God, and the things of God. How many times have you been as it were sick till you have accomplished your ends in a sinful course, and will you not now be sick of love after Christ, and after heavenly things? Hast thou not burnt in lust, and wilt thou now be key-cold in Religion?

3 God

3 God doth expresse as great, yea more dislike of lukewarmnesse in Religion, as if a man were of no Religion. Famous is that instance of *Laodicea*, *Rev. 3. 15, 16. I would thou wert either cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.* Not that God would have men to continue in, or return to Paganisme or Judaisme, both of which his soul abhors; but only because he doth exceedingly dislike lukewarmnesse in the profession of Christianity.

4 In a false Religion men have shewed much zeale and forwardnes. *If 46. 6. They lavish gold out of the bag, and weigh silver in the ballance, and hire a Goldsmith, and he maketh it a god, they fall down, yea, they worship, &c.* The people were so violent in an Idolatrous Religion, that they did spare no cost nor pains to accomplish it. So those false Prophets and Worshippers of *Baal*, *1 Kin. 18. 28. they cried aloud, and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lances till the blood gushed out upon them.* So *Paul* when he was a Jew and adversary to Christianity, *beyond measure he persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it, Gal. 1. 13. Jer. 33. 35. Those superstitious Jewes built the high places of Baal, which are in the Valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Moloch, which commanded them not.* So zealous and fervent were they in their Idolatrous worship and service, that they would cause their children to be burnt as a sacrifice to their false god. So likewise among us, the *Papists* are zealous and eager for their worship, witness their Whippings and Scourgings and Fastings, and other penances. If men be thus zealous in false waies, how fervent should we be in a true? But so much for the first branch of the Caution.

165. 46. 6.

1 Kings 18. 28.

700

Notes to gush
out, or poure
out swiftly and
plentifully.

Gal. 1. 13.

Jer. 32. 35.

Caution 2.

2 Take heed you do not think you shall ever go to Heaven without this holy zeal and violence. It was onely the violent in *John Baptists* daies that took Heaven. You can never go to heaven except you strive to enter in at the strait gate. You must strive till you sweat, you must strive with all your might, and all will be little enough. Take heed therefore you do not think it an easy thing to go to heaven. But withall take this, though you cannot go to heaven without this holy violence, you shall never go to heaven for it, *Jam. 1. 25. Whosoever looketh into the perfect law*

James 1. 25.

of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetfull bearer of the Word, but a doer also, this man shall be blessed in his deed. So that you see a man shall not go to heaven for his doing, though he cannot go to heaven without it.

3 When you see the servants of God zealous and violent in the waies of God, take heed you do not judge of this as the world doth, that you do not judge it a vain and needlesse thing, or that you do not judge it folly and madnesse. When *Paul* was thus violent for the propagation of the Gospell, when he came before *Festus*, *Festus* told him, that much learning had made him mad: But *Paul* said, I am not mad, but speak forth the words of truth and sobernesse.

Caution 3.

4 Take heed thou dost not abate thy zeal in the matters of religion, because it may be thou meetest with much reproach and many scandalls from the men of the world for the sake of religion. *David* was more eager in his dancing before the Ark, notwithstanding the scoffings of his wife. If scandalls and reproaches, and troubles will make thee abate thy zeal for God, thou wilt never be able to hold out to the end. I will never believe that man will indure a rack for his Religion, that cannot bear a reproach. He that cannot endure a frown for it, will never endure fire and faggot; if thou canst not endure a raunt or jeer for thy profession of Religion, much lesse wilt thou endure a Gibbet. And so much for the use of Caution.

Caution 4.

The next Use is this: This Doctrine may stir up in us an holy lamentation: If it were so, that in the daies of *John* the Baptist, men were so holily violent after *Jesus* Christ and his Ordinances; then how should we lament and bewail our times, when we consider how defective men are now adaies, and how much we fall short of those converts at the first plantation of the Gospell?

Use 5.

For lamentation for the apostasie of our times.

We fall short of Primitive Christians in three regards.

1 In love.

We fall short of them, 1 In regard of their love and union. It was observed that the primitive Christians were so full of love and affection to one another, that they could be acquainted together as well in half an hour, as in half a yeare. In those times they were so conversant in that duty of love, that *St Paul* saith, *This needed not that he should write to them concerning love, 1 Thes. 4. 9.* In those daies they were of one accord. The very Heathens took notice of it, and said: Behold, how the Christians love one another.

1 Thes. 4. 9.

another. But we are fallen into those times, wherein the love of men grows cold; we, upon whom the ends of the world are come, bite and teare, and devour one another.

2 In contempt
of the World.

2 We come short of them in the contempt of the world. You know how much those Christians, *Heb. 11.* lived above the world: *They confessed that they were but strangers and pilgrims upon earth, verse. 13.* They were not satisfied with the world, but sought after a better Countrey. *They came and laid their wealth at the Apostles feet, to do with it whatever they pleased.* For cloathing they were contented with sheeps skins and goats skins; and instead of our stately houses, they were satisfied with dens and caves of the earth.

3 We fall short of the primitive Christians herein also, that they were taken off from that form of Religion, wherein they were born and bred up, and received a new form of Religion. Whereas they might have objected, all our fathers were bred up in the Law of *Moses*, and shall we take upon us a new way, a new religion? But they did not contend about it, they forsook the rudiments of *Moses*, and embraced this new way and doctrine, which as they thought was never taught before. But we are more addicted to customes then Scriptures, we chole rather to follow what hath been, then to consider what should be. Many have much reasoning and contention for the old form of Religion. Many are so settled in their old forms and waies, wherein they were born and bred, that they will not endure or seek for a better form and way. *Hezlin* in his Geography reports of the King of *Morocco*, that he told the English Embassadour in King *Johns* time, that he had lately read *Pauls* Epistles, which he liked so well, that were he to chuse his Religion, he would embrace Christianity, but every one ought to die in the faith wherein hee was born: So it is with many among us, they are perswaded they ought, and resolved they will live and die in those customes and waies wherein they were born; they will not deny themselves in these triviall things, for the exaltation of Christ; and herein also we fall short of the primitive Christians. And thus much for the last Use. And so I have dispatched the first and main Doctrine, That in the times of the first promulgation of the Gospell, greater success did attend the Ministry, and multitudes did come in with more holy violence after the Ordinances, then ever they did before.

The

The fifth Sermon.

MATTHEW II, 12.

And from the times of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.



Here is but one Doctrine behind, and that is taken from the consideration of the quality of those persons who did express this holy violence; who they were, our Saviour himselfe acquaints us, *Mat. 21. 31.*

Mat. 21. 31. 32.

Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that the Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you, Ver. 32. The Publicans and Harlots believed John. The Pharisees that led strict lives, had a kind of legall righteousness, yet they were not the people that did receive Jesus Christ, but Publicans and harlots. The Pharisees and Lawyers rejected or frustrated the counsell of God against themselves, or within themselves, being not baptized of him. But the Publicans justified God, being baptized with the Baptisme of John, Luke 7. 29 30. They that used this violence, were men that lived by rapine, deceit, exaction, and oppression; so did the Publicans. Whence the Observation is this:

Luke 7. 29, 30.

That usually those that have been most sinful before conversion, do expresse the more holy violence and eagernesse of affection after Jesus Christ in the Gospel, after they are converted. In the handling of this point, I shall do three things.

Doctr. 2.

- 1 I shall demonstrate the truth of it by Scripture-instances.
- 2 I shall shew the reasons why God did pitch upon such chiefly who were most notorious ill-livers.
- 3 I shall shew why such men are more violent in religion then others.

1 I shall demonstrate the truth of the Doctrine by Scripture-instances. I shall give but two instances, the one in *Mary Magdalen*, the other in *Paul*. 1 *Mary Magdalen*, she was an unclean person, a very harlot, a great sinner, but after her conversion, she

Proved, by example, Magdalen.

thought nothing too much for Christ. 1 She annointed his feet with a pound of Spikenard that was very costly, worth three hundred pence, that is, worth above nine pound in our money, *John 12.5.* 2 She broke through many difficulties to come to Christ. Christ was in another mans house, (and he *Simon a Pharisee*) *Luke 7.36,37.* and set down to supper. She might have raised an objection, and said, I cannot come at him, and they in the house may think evil of it; but all this could not keep her back. Further, there were more discouragements. Not onely *Judas*, but others were angry at her, *There were some (not onely Judas, but others also) that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this wast of the ointment made?* Yes, the Disciples too had indignation at her, *Mat. 26.8.* *The Disciples had indignation.* Yet she came to Christ through all these difficulties, and there wept, *Luke 7.44.* And that so plentifully, that she washed the feet of Christ with her tears. Her eyes that had been windowes of lust; were now flood-gates of teares.

2 Another instance is that of *Paul*. Before his conversion he was a notorious sinner. He had an hand in the death of that holy man *Stephen*, *Acts 8.1.* He was a man that breathed out threatenings and slughters against the Disciples of the Lord, *Acts 9.1.* He was a blasphemer, a persecutor, and injurious, *1 Tim. 1.13.* he cared not what he did to the people of God. Yes further, he did compell others to blaspheme, *Acts 26.11.* and being exceedingly mad against them, he persecuted them even unto strange Cities. And yet behold, this man that was so eminent a sinner before his conversion, after ward made recompence; he grew and abounded in grace; he grew as eminent in grace, as he was notorious in sin. As he had haled men to prison formerly, so now he drawes them to Christ. He preached that faith, that once he persecuted, *Gal. 1.23.* So much of the first particular, the proof of the point by Scripture-instances.

Quest.
Why did God
call such vile
persons?

Ans. 1.

The second particular is this: Why did God pitch upon such chiefly, as were most notorious ill-livers?

I answer; Two reasons may be given of it.

1 To beat off the Pharisees from resting in their own righteousness, that they might see that salvation was of grace, and not of works. Had this effect appeared in multitudes of the Scribes and

and Pharisees, some would have attributed it to their learning, others to their strict and holy walking, and another conversation, people would have thought they had merited this at Gods hands; and therefore God passed by them, and made choice of others far more unholy and prophane, to knock them off from their own righteousness, and from dependance upon it.

2 It was to magnifie the riches, freeness, and greatness of Gods grace, that was brought in and manifested by the Gospell. God would hereby give to understand, that the doctrine of the Gospell, was a doctrine of grace (not that men might live as they list, for these vile people were not encouraged in, but redeemed from a vain conversation, but) *Johns* work was a tough and hard work to pul down those that were as high as mountains in pride, as hard as the rocks of those mountains, to make rough and crooked things smooth and streight. And yet all this *John* was to do, all this *John* did in the preparation of the people for Christ, *Isa.* 40. 4. The greater the wound is, the more is the skill and care of the Physician seen and commended. The more and greater the sins are that are pardoned, the more is the grace of God advanced.

So much for the second particular.

The third particular is this: Why are such violent and sinful persons most eager and violent after their conversion?

Why are such most zealous.

Ans. 1.

1. This proceeds from an holy indignation against themselves, which is a fruit of repentance or conversion, as you read, 2 Cor. 7. 11. For this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness did it work in you? ye, what clearing of your selves? ye, what indignation? ye, what fear? ye, what desire? ye, what zeal? ye, what revenge? There writeth in such a desire to be revenged upon themselves, *Isa.* 30. 22. Ye shall desire to see the removing of the graven images of silver, and the ornaments of thy molten images of gold, then shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth, then shalt say unto them; Get thee hence, *Isa.* 2. 20. In that day a man shall cast his idols of silver, and his idols of gold which they have made, each one for himselfe to worship, to the moles and to the bats. *Cramer* burned his right hand first, because it had subscribed his recantation, and oftentimes repeated in the flame, O this unworthy right hand! An holy indignation makes him to reason thus within himself: Could I sin worse then others, and shall I now be

Isa. 30. 22.

Isa. 2. 20.

tented with less grace then others? Could I be as swift as a Dromedary in the waies of sin, and shall I creep like a snail in the waies of God? Have I been zealous for the committing of sin, and shall I be cold in my motions after Christ? Such persons are ashamed of their former waies, and therefore they now labour to take off that reproach by making some reparations.

2 This proceeds from that sense that is in such persons of an utter and absolute necessity of getting into Christ. You know a man that hath but cut his finger, will not make much ado, but he that hath got a great and dangerous wound, sees a necessity of the cure, and that he is a dead man, if he do not get help. So a man that lives in a common way of sinning, he thinks his sins are inconsiderable, he sees no necessity of closing with Christ for cure. But a man that hath been much in sin, and notorious in wickedness, when God comes and opens his eyes by effectually calling, he sees a necessity of getting help by Jesus Christ, and that if they have not Christ, they are undone for ever, they shall perish eternally.

And thus I have finished the Doctrinall parts; I now proceed to make application. And this doctrine is eminently usefull to three sorts of men. 1 To those who have been formerly very vile and great sinners, but are now converted. 2 To meer civill and honest men. 3 To those that yet remain and go on in a sinfull course.

Use 1.
To great sin-
ners converted

1 To those that have been formerly very great sinners, but are now converted: To them I have two things to say.

1 Labour to follow this pattern that is here propounded in the Gospel, and in this doctrine, labour to proportion your graces now that you are converted, to the number and greatness of your sins before conversion. As you have been violent in sin formerly, to see that now you be as violent after the things of heaven. So did *Manasses*, he was a great sinner, he filled *Jerusalem* with blood, he was a gross Idolater, a destroyer of Gods worship, 2 *Chron.* 33. 12. And therefore he *humiliated himselfe greatly before the God of his fathers*. So *Paul*, because he was a greater sinner then the rest of the Apostles; therefore he laboured more abundantly then they all. If therefore sin hath abounded, see that grace doth abound also. As you have formerly added iniquity unto iniquity,

2 *Chro.* 33. 12.

iniquity, so now see that you add grace to grace. As you have with much eagerneſſe given up the members of your bodies, as instruments of unrighteouſneſſe unto ſin and uncleanneſſe, ſo ſee that you give them up as instruments of righteouſneſſe unto holineis. Particularly, ſee that you do abound. 1 In the grace of humiliation. 2 In the gtace of love. 3 In the grace of humiliation; little humiliation is not ſutable to great ſins. That garment that hath moſt ſpots in it, muſt have moſt riſing; that which hath the moſt duſt in it, needs the moſt beating. There muſt be a *ſcruſ*, not onely *qualitatis*, but *equalitatis* alſo, if poſſibly it can be. There ſhould be ſome equality between the ſtrength that was put forth in the ſervice of ſin, and that wee now put forth in the ſervice of God. It is very obſervable, *Lev. 11. 24, 25. He that toucheth an unclean thing, ſhall be unclean till even; but he that beareth an unclean thing, ſhall waſh his clothes, and be unclean till even.* Though a man be but defiled a little with ſin, if he doth but touch a ſin as it were, commit a little ſin, he had need be humbled; but thoſe that wallow in ſinfull courſes, and bear ſin about them, they muſt look to be more humbled then others were.

Lev. 11. 24, 25

a See that you proportion your love to Chriſt, to your ſinfulneſſe againſt Chriſt in times paſt. Haſt thou been a great and a vile ſinner before converſion, know that a little love to Chriſt is not anſwerable to thy great ſins. *Luke 7. 47. Her ſins which are many are forgiven her; therefore ſhe loved much.* Jeſus Chriſt expects and requires more love of ſuch to whom he hath pardoned much, then he doth of thoſe to whom little is forgiven. We read in *John 21. 15. Jeſus ſaid unto Peter, Simon, ſon of Jonas, Loveſt thou me more then theſe?* Jeſus Chriſt did not ask him, *Loveſt thou me as all?* nor, *Loveſt thou me as theſe?* but, *Loveſt thou me more then theſe?* Thou haſt ſinned more then theſe, doeſt thou love me more then theſe? Chriſt expected more love from Peter then from the reſt of the Diſciples. And ſo Peter did return more love to Chriſt, then the reſt did: And though the book of the *Acts* be called the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, yet there is more ſpoken of Peter, then of all the reſt of the Apoſtles that had been Chriſt in the fleſh. Peter after his fall, did ſhew more love then the reſt. 1 Peter preached the firſt ſermon after Chriſts Reſurrection and Aſcenſion, *Acts 2. 14. 3 Peter was the firſt that*

John 21. 15

Acts 2. 14

went

John 20.6.

John 21.7.

went into the Sepulchre after Christs Death and Resurrection. Although *Peter* and *John* did run to the Sepulchre, and *John* outran *Peter*, and came first thither, yet *Peter* first went down into the Sepulchre to see where Christ was laid. *Job. 20.6.* 3. When Christ after his Resurrection was walking upon the waters, *Peter* cast himself into the sea to go to meet Jesus, he had no patience to stay till he came at him. *John 21.7.* 4. *Peter* converted more souls to Christ, then all the rest of the Apostles did, three thousand souls at one Sermon. 5. *Peter* died for Christ, he was crucified for Christ, and he desired that he might be crucified with his head downward, because he thought it was too much honour for him to die as his Master. So you see that as *Peter* had been more treacherous to his Master, then the rest; so *Peter* was more ardent in his love to Christ, then the rest. And so you must all learn to see, that as your sins have been more and greater then the sins of other men, so your humiliation must be more, your love must be stronger. That is the first branch of the first Use.

2 This may teach you to magnifie the riches and freeness of Gods grace, that God should cast an eye of grace and love upon such a wretch as thou wast; that God should pass by such men as the strict Pharisee, & pitch upon thee: that God should not make thee as exemplary in punishment, as thou wast in sin; that thou shouldst be made a monument of his mercy, who deserved to be a spectacle of wrath, that God should make his mercy to rest upon thee, that might cause his justice to take hold upon thee. So much for the first Use.

Use 2.

To civill men.

3 This Doctrine is usefull to men of a civil carriage, of an honest and inoffensive behaviour in the world, that have been religiously educated, lived ingenuously, that never broke out into such gross and exorbitant courses as other men have done.

To you I would say three things.

1 Whereas you say, that you are of a more civil life then others, and so you are apt to perswade your selves, your case is better then others: Consider, others are more easie and ordinarily converted then you are: Publicans go to Heaven before you. You read in *Luke 18.14.* the Publican went away justified rather then the Pharisee. *Luther* hath a notable gloss upon these words: It is far more easie for harlots and notorious sinners to be

Luke 18.14.

be saved, then for proud titular Saints, because the former are easily brought to a sense of their sins, but the latter are like to perish in the conceit of their own righteousness, except they be converted in an extraordinary manner. This I speak, not that I would dissuade you from a civill course of life, or draw you to an open prophaneesse; but that you may not rest upon your morall accomplishments, upon your earnings, and think that you are Sermon-proof, that the Minister can hardly meet with your corruptions and consciences.

2 If God doth convert such men, usually they are not so eminent in grace as others. This is expressed, *Luke 7.43.* &c. He to whom most is forgiven, loves most, and doth most service. Usually such content themselves with smaller measures of grace, then they whose transgressions have exceeded.

3 What thy sins want in bulk and magnitude, thou makest up in number. *Your transgressions are many, your backslidings are increased, Jer. 5.6.* Thy continuance in sins, maketh thy sins equivalent to greater sins; if your sins fall short of others in nature, it may be, they exceed in aggravations; it may be thou sinnest against more mercy, more knowledge; it may be thou maicst have more sin in thine heart, though anothers sins do more break out in his life.

So much for the second Use.

19 This Doctrine is usefull to profane men, to the looser sort.

1 Let this be an invitation and encouragement to you to come in to Christ, and to embrace the Gospel. 1 Though your sins be great, yet they are not so great as the mercies of God. The mercy of God is compared to a Sea; the Sea you know is a very great deep. A great Leviathan may be covered in the Sea, as well as a little fish, a great rock, as well as a little pebble. A remarkable place you have, *Isa. 44.22.* *I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins; return unto me for I have redeemed thee.* The Sun can scatter both thick and thin clouds.

2 Though thou hast been very sinfull, yet thy conversion taketh away all infamy from thee. *Paul* was once a blasphemer, &c. but that reproach was rolled away, when through the grace of God he found mercy. It is very observable in the Genealogy of Christ there are but four Women mentioned. (it is not usual)

Longe possibilia est meretricis & notorios peccatores salvari, quod superbas sanctulos; illi enim tandem cognunt sentire suam peccata, hi vero in persequente propria sanctitatis movuntur, nisi mirabili modo convertantur.

Luke 7.43.

Jer. 5.6.

Use 3.

To profane men in two regards.

Isa. 44.22.

Mat. 1. 3.

Gen. 38. 38.

Heb. 11. 31.

Gen. 19. 37.

to mention Women in Genealogies) and the Scripture sets a mark of infamy upon them all. The first is *Thamar*, Mat. 1. 3. she was an incestuous Woman, for she lay with her father in law, as it is recorded, Gen. 38. 38. The second is *Rahab*, verse 5. she was an harlot, Heb. 11. 31. The third is *Ruth*, verse 5. she came of *Moab*, the son of *Lot* by incest, begotten of his own daughter; Gen. 19. 37. The fourth is *Bathsheba*, verse 6. she was guilty of adultery. This is done for the comfort and encouragement of the most infamous sinners to come in to Christ.

3 If God call you, you are likely to be greater instruments of his glory then others. A persecuting *Saul* became a preaching *Paul*; a wanton *Mary*, became a weeping *Mary*; she, whose whoredoms had been spoken of in all places where shee dwelt, afterward her grace came to be spoken of wheresoever the Gospel was preached. So much for the first branch of that Use.

2 Because Doctrines of comfort many men suck poison from, and so get their ruine; therefore I shall lay down a Caution or two. Take heed you do not abuse this Doctrine.

1 Do not make the conversion of any scandalous sinner, to be any stumbling block in your way to heaven. It was the great stumbling block in the way of the Pharisees, when they saw that Christ would eat meat with Publicans and sinners, they said, *He was a friend of Publicans and sinners*. Doe not entertain hard thoughts of Christ, nor of the waies of Christ for that. Indeed, if Religion were any cloak of sin, for if it did countenance and incourage men in sin, it were something; but it is that which makes of a sinner a Saint. Conversion, though it find us vile and bad, it doth not leave us so.

2 Take heed you do not suck this poison from it, that when you heare the worse men are before conversion, the better they will be after conversion. Some, it may be, will draw this inference from it: That it is the best to be as vile and wicked as one can, for so one shall be most zealous afterward. Take heed of that. For

1 It is a great question whether God will convert thee or not; and if thou be not converted, all thy sins will be so many cards to tie thee in hell; the aggravations of thy sin will be additions to thy torment and punishment.

2 The deeper thou art in sin, the greater must thy humiliation be. Will any wise man break his leg, because a broken bone well set and knit again, will bee stronger then ever it was before? Knotty timber shall have most blowes.

3 The longer thou continuest in sin, the longer will God keep thee under suspension, and it will be long before he vouchsafeth the comforts of his Spirit, he will fill thee with indignation and horror. Though great sins cannot *vastare gratiam*, lay waste the grace of God, yet they may *vastare conscientiam*, lay waste the peace of conscience; though it may be they will not put thee into a state of ejection, yet they will bring thee into a state of dejection; if thou art not cast off, yet thou shalt be cast down, and therefore take heed thou dost not abuse this pretious doctrine.

And so much for this last use.

And so I have done with both Doctrines, and finished the Text: *And from the daies of John the Baptist untill now, the Kingdoms of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.*

FINIS.

The Zealous Christian holding Communion
with God, in wrestling and importunate Praier.

The first Sermon.

Luxa 11. 8.

I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will give unto him as many as he needeth.

MY Text is the conclusion of a familiar Parable used by Christ, whereby hee instructs his Disciples touching the doctrine

The Context.

Lords Prayer
not command-
ed to be u'ed.

Reason 1.

Mat. 6. 9.

Reason 2.

doctrine and use of Prayer. The occasion offered to Christ to fall upon this subject, is intimated, *verse 1.* of this Chapter. *One of his Disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his Disciples.* Whether it was one of the twelve Apostles, or one of the seventy Disciples that propounded the question, is not easie to determine, nor is it materiall to know: Hereupon Christ gives them a platform or directions for Prayer, to direct them about the matter; and withall gives them a parable to inform concerning the manner of praying. For the matter of it, you have it in these words, when you pray, say, *Our father, &c.* Not as though it were a command from Jesus Christ, that alwaies when we pray, we should use that form of speech, which is here set down. Jesus Christ indeed intended it for a platform or a pattern to direct us in the making of our prayers; for there is nothing we stand in need of, and goe to God for, but it is to be found in these words; but he never intended to tie up his people to this form. And that I will prove by four reasons.

1 Because though *Luke* here saith, *When you pray, say, Our &c.* yet *Matthew* varies in his expression, and saith, *When you pray, say after this manner, Mat. 6. 9.* to teach us, that we are to stick to the matter contained in this prayer, but we are not confined every time we pray, to use the same expressions. By *Luke* we learn, that the using of this form of words is lawfull; by *Matthew*, that it is not necessary.

2 A second reason is this: Because in the recitall of the Lords prayer by *Matthew* and *Luke* there is much difference; and though the difference be not materiall, yet it is verball, which is enough to prove what I intend; to wit, that we are not bound to the words. In the third Petition it is thus in *Matthew*, *Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven;* In *Luke* it is thus, *Thy will be done, as in heaven so in earth.* In the fourth Petition it is said in *Matthew*, *Give us this day our daily bread.* In *Luke* it is said, *Give us daily day by day our daily bread.* In the fifth Petition it is said in *Matthew*, *And forgive us our debts.* In *Luke* it is said, *for we forgive every one that is indebted to us.* Lastly, it is said in *Matthew*, *For thine is the Kingdome, the power and the glory, for ever, Amen.* But these words are wholly left out in *Luke*. Which variance teacheth us thus much, that you must not recede from the

matter

matter or purport of the words, yet we are not to be superstitious and solicitous about the expressions; as *Chemnitzius* observes.

3 Another reason to prove that we are not limited to that forme, is this: Because Jesus Christ himselfe and all his Apostles did never use this for ne in all their prayers. And if there had been a necessity that we should have used it, Christ would (as he might easily) have left a command behind him in the Word, and also he would have practised it himself, that it might have been our example. This reason *Chemnitzius* gives, There are many prayers in *Dauids* Psalmes. many in the Prophets, many in the Acts of the Apostles. many in the Epistles of *Paul* which are different in expression from this form, and yet doubtlesse received acceptance from God *.

Reason 4. Another argument is this. Because it is the work, and office of the Spirit of God, not onely to help the people of God in the manner how, but also in the matter what to pray, to put even words into our mouths, *Rom. 8. 26. We know not what to should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit helps our infirmities:* And upon these grounds it appears, that we are not bound to use that form of words. Ministers do sometimes use this form of prayer, to justifie the lawfulness of it, and sometimes they do not use it, lest people should dote too much upon set forms. And so much for the matter of prayer: I come now to the manner, and that is expressed in this Parable: which Parable is laid down in the 5. 6, 7, 8. Verses. *And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves: For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him. And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not, the door is now shut, and my children are in bed with me; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend yet because of his importunity, he will arise and give him as many as he needeth:* Which Parable consists of two parts.

1 A Prayer.

2 An answer to it.

In the Prayer here are four parts.

1 The relation of the person praying, to him, to whom hee praies, *his friend, Verse 4. Which of you shall have a friend, &c.*

F 3

Whence

Ne de verbis nimis superstitiosè solliciti sumus.

Reason 3.

* *Multa sunt preces in Psalmis Davidicis, multa in Prophetis, multa in Actis Apostolicis, multa in Epistolis Paulinis, &c. Rom. 8. 26.*

Luke 11. 5, 6, 7, 8.

The coherence

Whence observe, God must be a friend to us, before any of our prayers can be accepted.

Isa. 26. 9.

2 The time of his address, *Verse 5. at midnight*, in times of greatest need, of extreamest necessity, *Isa. 26. 9. With my soule have I desired thee in the night.*

From whence observe, that the chiefest time for Gods people to be earnest in prayer to God, is a time of trouble.

3 The matter of his request, *Lend me three loaves*. By which some Interpreters understand the three persons in the Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the holy Ghost. Some refer them to the three cardinall Graces, *Faith, Hope, and Charity*; but these are vain interpretations. It is observable, that in Parables some things are used for ornament only, not for the sense. The intent and design of it is this, That we are to order our prayers according to our present necessities.

4 There is the occasion of this request, *Verse 6. A friend of mine is come to me, and I have nothing*, &c.

The answer returned to this request, is double.

1 By way of negation, *Verse 7. Trouble me not*, &c. Observe, that Gods people may have denials to their prayers: The reason of this denyall is, *the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed*. There are some times when Gods own people may pray to him, yet he shuts his eares to their prayers, God will as it were hide himselfe from the prayers of his own people, that they shall not come at him. Not onely the doors are shut, but his children are in bed with him. These children here spoken of are the creatures of God; from whence observe, That there may be times, when God may take away all his creature-comforts from his own people, that they shall not any waies be helpfull to them.

2 By way of concession, and that is in the words of the text; *I say unto you, Though he will not arise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will arise and give him as many as he needs.*

In which words you have, 1 The relation of him that prayes, to him whom he praies, a friend.

Obser. *There must be a state of friendship between God and a sinner, before his prayers can be heard.*

2 The condition upon which the prayer was heard, and that is set down two waies.

1 Ne-

The Text
divided.

1 Negatively, he will hear him, not because he is his friend.

2 Positively, he will hear him because of his importunity.

Obser. 1 *That merely a state of friendship and reconciliation with God, is not a sufficient ground for us, to believe that our prayers shall be heard and accepted by God.*

Obser. 2 *There must be an holy importunity, even in Gods own friends, in their prayers, to which they expect a gracious return.*

3 Here is the amplification of the concession: There is more given in the concession, then was desired in the supplication. He desired but three loaves, and because of his holy importunity, he did rise and give him as many as he needed.

Whence observe; That where there is an holy importunity in our prayers, God doth, in his returns to that soul, give more then was desired.

The first part of the Text, was the relation of the praier to him, to whom he makes his prayer. The observation is this:

A man must be brought into a state of friendship, or reconciliation with God, before any praier he makes can be accepted.

I will prove this Doctrine by three Reasons, and then apply it.

The Reasons are three.

1 God accepteth not the person for the prayers sake, but the prayer for the persons sake. We read, *Gen. 4. 4. God had respect unto Abel, and unto his offering; first to Abel, then to his sacrifice.* God did accept of his service, because his person was in a state of favour with God, God is first pleased with the worker, before he can accept the work. This is also laid down, *Heb. 11. 5. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, — for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.* Now without faith in Christ to justify thy person, thou canst not please God. Here lies the great difference between the Papists and us. The papists say that works justify the person, we say, the person justifies the work; for make the tree good, and the fruit must needs be good.

2 Because, till we be brought into that state of reconciliation, we have no share in the intercession, satisfaction and righteousness of Jesus Christ. And till we have a share in them, our prayers cannot be accepted. *Jacob* could not receive the blessing from his father, but in the garments of his elder brother; nor can

Doctrine 1.

Reason 1.
Gen. 4. 4.

Heb. 11. 5.

Reason 2.

Rev. 8. 3.

ἵνα δώσω τοῖς
προσευχαῖς
τοῦ ἁγίου.
Ila. 56. 7.

כִּית
תַּפִּלִּין

Reason. 3.

Gal. 4. 6.

Use 1.

Psal. 109. 7.

Prov. 21. 27.

we receive any thing from the hands of God, but in the robes of Christ. No prayer can be accepted by God, but in and through the intercession of Jesus Christ. If Christ be not an Intercessour in Heaven, no prayer will be heard on earth. In Rev. 8. 3. it is written, there was an Angel that came and stood at the Altar, having a golden Censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all Saints upon the golden Altar which was before the throne. The word in the Greek is to this purpose, That he should add to the Prayers of the Saints: As if the prayer of Christ and a Believer were all one. In Isa. 56. 7. God promileth. I will bring my people to my holy mountain, and make them joyfull in my house of prayer, &c. In the Hebrew it is thus, I will make them joyfull in the house of my prayer. Our prayers are but as so many cyphers as signifie nothing, till the intercession of Christ is added to them; without that they cannot be accepted.

3 Because, till we are in a state of friendship and reconciliation, we have not the assistance of Gods Spirit to help us; and if we have not the assistance of the Spirit, we shall never find acceptance with him. All requests that are not dictated by the Spirit, are but the breathings of the flesh, which God regards not. Now till we are reconciled to God, we cannot have the Spirit, Gal. 4. 6. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying Abba, Father. So that till you be sons, you cannot have the Spirit.

And so much for the Reasons: I come now to the application. If this be so, that a man must be in a state of friendship before his prayers can be accepted: Hence learn, That all that ever thou dost before that estate, is odious to God. Not only thy sinfull actions, but even thy civill, thy naturall, yea, thy religious actions, not that they are so in themselves, or in regard of God, but in regard of the doer of it, Psal. 109. 7. — Let his prayer be turned into sin. Thou makest a prayer against sin, God will turn thy prayers into sin. Many prayers cannot turn one sin into a grace, but one sin wilfully, and resolutely continued in, can turn all thy prayers into sin, Prov. 21. 27. The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord; how much more when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?

A diseased body, turns that food into corrupt humours, which

an healthfull body doth into sound nourishment. I have read of a precious stone that had excellent vertue in it, but lost all its efficacy, if it was put into a dead mans mouth. Prayer is an Ordinance of great excellency, of great efficacy; but if it be in a dead mans mouth, if it come out of the heart of one that is dead in trespasses and sins, it loseth all its vertue: water that is pure in the fountain, is corrupted in the channel.

2 This doctrine overthrowes one main pillar of the Romish Religion, justification by works. If God accepteth of the person before he accepts the work, how can any person be justified by works? Unless thy person be justified, unless thou art reconciled, thy works are wicked works; and can wicked works justifie? Good works make not a man good, but a good man makes a work good; and shall a work that a man made good, return again and make the man good? If we had no other reason against Justification by works (saith Mr *Perkins*) but this, it were sufficient.

3 Let this teach you, not onely to look to the fitnessse and disposedness of your hearts in praier, but also to make inquiry what thou art that praieest. It is our duty, and it is very good to look to the qualification of the heart in prayer, to look to the qualification of the duty; but the main work is to look after the qualification of the person, and to see whether thou art in a state of favour and reconciliation with God; for if the person be not in favour with God, you may be confident the petitions will not be heard nor accepted, but God looks upon it as the corrupt breathings of thy sinfull and corrupt heart. You are to look therefore in the performance of duty, whether you can go to God in prayer as a Father. There are many that look after the qualification of their duty; but few look after the qualification of the person, to see whether they be justified or no, whether God be their friend or not. But we should mainly look to this, for let the heart of a man be never so well disposed, (let us suppose it, for indeed no unreconciled men can be well disposed, to speak properly) yet if thy person be not justified, thy praier cannot be accepted. God cares not for the Rhetorick of prayers, how eloquent they are; nor for the Arithmetick of prayers, how many they are; nor for the Logick of them, how ratioll and methodicall they are; nor for the Musique of them, what an harmony and melody of words thou

Use 2.

Use 3.

halt; but he looks at the divinity of prayers, which is from the qualification of a person, from a justified person, and in a sanctified manner, It is good to enquire, Is my heart right? Is my mind composed? Are my affections raised, kindled in prayer? But chiefly enquire, is my person accepted of God?

Use 4.

4 Let me give a caution here, Take heed you do not mistake this doctrine: Let no man think, that because God accepts no prayer, except the person be justified, therefore wicked men are excused from prayer; for though God doth not accept of every mans prayer, yet every man in the world ought to pray: For

1 They must pray as creatures, that stand in need of their Creator. The Ravens cry, and God giveth them meat.

Jer. 10. 25.

Rom 3. 11.

2 The Lord blames wicked men for not praying to him, Jer. 10. 25. *Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen, that know thee not, and upon the families that call upon thy name.* Rom. 3. 11. *There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.*

Act 8. 22, 23.

3 They are commanded to pray, Acts 8. 22, 23. *Peter said to Simon Magus, Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee; for I perceive thou art in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity.*

The second Sermon.

Luke 11. 18.

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will give unto him as many as he needeth.

AND thus much for the first doctrine, and first part of the Text, the relation between him that praiseth, and him to whom prayers are made. I come now to the second part, which is the condition upon which the prayer was heard; and that I told you was set down two waies.

1 Negatively.

2 Positively.

2 Positively.

1- Negatively, Not because he is his friend.

The observation thence is this,

That a state of friendship or reconciliation with God, is not sufficient to assure a man that God will give returns to his prayers. Although a man must be brought into a state of friendship and favour with God, before his prayer can be heard, yet it is not a sufficient ground for a man to believe that God will give him an answer of all his prayers. He will give unto him, not because he is his friend. So that a godly man may make many prayers, and yet God may not give any answer to his prayers.

In the handling of this Doctrine, I shall do three things.

1 Shew the reasons of the Doctrine.

2 I shall shew, in what cases God may refuse to give his own people the things that they may pray for.

3 I shall shew how we may know, when God denies to hear our prayers, whether the denial be in mercy.

The first particular is the reason, why God may, and doth sometimes deny to heare the prayers of his friends: And that is this; Because, God hath tied returns of prayer, not onely to the qualification of the person, but also to the qualification of the duty; that the duty be performed not onely by a fit person, but also in a right way, in a right manner, to a right end. God doth not say, let a godly man pray how he will, I will hear his prayers; that were the way to make him to be careless & remiss in the performance of duties. Therefore the Lord expects qualification of the duty, as well as of the person. God requires that duties be done with feeling, fervency, faith, fear and reverence; they must be done in a right manner.

There is a fivefold qualification that God requires, even of his friends as a condition of their acceptance.

1 The heart must be prepared; *Psal. 10. 17. Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble, thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear. So Job 11. 13, 14, 15. If thou prepare thine ears, and stretch out thine hand towards him. If iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedness dwell in thy tabernacle. For then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot, yea, thou shalt be steadfast, and shalt not fear.* That is the first particular.

Doctr. 2.

Psal. 10. 17.

Job 11. 13, 14, 15.

2 Sin must be removed. So you find in the place last quoted, *iniquity must be put far away, &c.* When Gods own people come to worship before God, they must not let any sin lie upon their consciences, unrepented of and indulged.

3 The affections must be raised. *David*, when he set himself to prayer, he saith, *Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul, Psal. 25.* 1. You read often in Scripture, of lifting up a prayer to God, *Isa. 37. 4.* — *It may the Lord thy God will hear the words of Rabshakeh, whom the King of Assyria hath sent, — Wherefore lift up thy prayer for the remnant that is left, Jer. 7. 16. Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor prayer for them, 1 Tim. 2. 8. I will that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.*

4 The mind must be composed in prayer, *1 Cor. 7. 35.* We are to attend upon the Lord without distraction. *Daniel* set his face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, *Dan. 9. 3.* *In the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, said David, Psal. 5.* 3. As an Archer when he shoots an arrow, takes a care that his hand shake not; his heart was so fixed on God, that he could directly send his prayers unto him. Dost thou think, O man, that God will hear that prayer, which thou dost not hear thy self? Will God regard that prayer that thou dost not regard? Will God grant thy request, when thou dost not know what thou askest, because of that indisposednesse and distraction that lies upon thy spirit? You must therefore take care, when you betake your selves to prayer, that the Devil do not distract and disturb you.

5. The desires must be enlarged after God in prayer, *Jer. 29. 13.* *Then you shall seek me & find me, when you search for me with all your heart.* God bids us open our mouths wide, and I will fill them, *Psal. 81. 10.* God hath not promised to fill the heart, unless our mouth be opened.

Now put all these together: Our prayers will not be heard, except, 1 Our hearts be prepared. 2 Sin removed. 3 Our affections raised. 4 Our mindes composed. 5 Our desires enlarged. And judge, whether this be not ground enough for the Doctrine; That a state of friendship is not sufficient for the acceptance of our prayers.

Quest.

I come now to the second thing, and that is a Case of conscience:

Psal. 15. 1.

Isa. 37. 4.

Jer. 7. 16.

1 Tim. 2. 8.

1 Cor. 7. 35.

Dan. 9. 3.

Psal. 5. 3.

more military
disposition.

ence : it is this ; In what cases may God refuse to give his people the things they pray for ? I answer.

1 In case you indulge any sin in the heart, *Psal. 66. 18. If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear my prayer.* Sin which is in thine heart, by thine indulgence and approbation, doth provoke God, that he wil not give an answer to thy prayers,

2 In case thou dost seek for any mercy from God, to be fuel for thy sin and lust, *James 4. 3. Ye ask and receive not, because yee ask amiss, that you may consume it upon your lusts.* So the mother of *Zebadees* children, *Mar. 20. 21.* she said to Christ, *Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, the other on thy left in thy Kingdome.* Now this was an ambitious desire ; for she shewed Christ would have reigned upon earth, as an earthly King, and she desired that they might be next him, as he sate upon the Throne. Therefore Christ said, *You know not what you ask.* Christ would not give any answer to her request ; he would not gratifie her pride and ambition.

3 In case God sees we are not able to use the mercy well when we have it. If you would ask gifts from God, it may be God sees, that enlarged gifts will make thee proud, and that thou wouldest be puffed up with them, and exalt thy selfe above thy brethren, therefore God will denie thee. We read, *Gen. 26. 1, 2.* *When there was a famine in the Land, — He went to enquire of the Elders, whether he should go down into Egypt.* God answered, *Go not down into Egypt.* God would not let him go ; but in the daies of *Jacob* there was a famine in the Land, *Gen. 46. 3.* And God said to *Jacob*, *Go down into Egypt.* Now what might be the reason, that God would have *Jacob* go down into Egypt, and not *Isaac* ? The reason is this, *Isaac* was a man of weaker graces then *Jacob* was, and God saw, that if *Isaac* had gone down into Egypt for corn, he would have fallen into the sins of the Land. Now *Jacob* was a strong man in grace and gifts, for as a Prince he wrestled with God, and prevailed, and was called *Israel*. God saw that *Jacob* would resist their idolatrous waies ; and not be guilty of their sins. So you may ask mercies of God, and it may be you are not able to manage them well ; And therefore God denies you ; when as another asks the same mercy, and God gives it to him, because he sees he wil use it wel, and improve it to Gods glory.

When doth God deny requests ?

Ans.

James 4. 3.

Mar. 20. 21.

Gen. 26. 1, 2.

Gen. 46. 3.

Therefore reflect upon thy self; and when God denies thee a mercie which thou hast begged at his hands, say to thy self, This denial is in mercie, for he did not think me fit for it. If men would take this way to consider of Gods dealing with them, it would silence all the murmurings and repinings of their hearts against God.

4 If you pray but cursorily and careleslie, then God may deny you. He that praiseth coldly, doth as it were, intreat God to give him a deniall. God promiseth to be found, if we seek him with our whole hearts: But if we be careless and regardles of ourselves, how can we expect that God should regard us?

So much for answer to that Question. In what cases God may deny his peoples prayers.

This is the second thing.

3 The 3 particular is another case of conscience. And it is this: *Seeing God doth not hear the prayers of his people in some cases, How may we know, whether the denyall of our Prayers be in mercy or no?*

God doth not hear the prayers of wicked men, he denies them in wrath; but his peoples prayers he denies in mercie, and that is in these cases.

1 This is a mercie, in case any of his people ask any thing that is sinfull in it self. God denies that to his people in mercie, which he gives to others in wrath. God will not alwaies give to his people what they pray for, but what is best for them. If God should give his people all they ask, they would be undone. It is mercie to deny a mad man a sword, for he would cut his owne throat with it. To deny a child a knife, for he would cut his fingers with it. You have an instance in *Peter, Luke 5. 8. When Simon Peter saw him, he fell down at Jesus his knees, saying, Depart from me, for I am a sinfull man, O Lord.* Had Jesus Christ granted *Peter* his request, he had been undone for ever; Therefore he would not depart from him. So that this deniall was in mercie. As on the other side, it is a demonstration of Gods wrath many times, when God doth grant mercies to wicked men. So it was to *Pharaoh*, he desired that God would remove the plagues from him; God granted it, thereby to harden *Pharaohs* heart, and make him ripe for destruction.

*Qui frigide
orat, docet ne-
gare.*

Quest.
Denials of
prayer, when
in mercy.

Ans.

Luke 5. 8.

2 God denies in mercie, if that we ask would be an occasion of sin. Suppose a man buy wealth, God sees the having of wealth would make him a proud man. Now the deniall of that is a mercie to him. As in the fore-mentioned instance, God would not let *Moses* go down to *Egypt*, because it would have been an occasion of sin to him. As he said very well, God denies that in love, which he grants in anger. God doth not hear many in their desires, that he may hear them for their good.

3 God denies a prayer in mercie, when he gives a better in lieu of it; It was the desire of *Moses*, that he might go into the land of *Canaan*, but it was better to him to go to the heavenlie *Canaan*, and therefore God translated him thither. So the Apostles desired Christ to tell them, when he would restore the Kingdom to *Israel*. He would resolve them that, yet he gave them a greater mercie, for he gave them the holy Ghost. So *David* desired the life of that child that was illegitimate; but God took away the Bastard (which would have been a living monument of *David's* follie) and gave him a *Solomon*. God will either give us what we ask (saith *Bernard*) or what he knowes to be better for us.

4 God may denie to return this request in mercy, to quicken our hearts and affections in prayer, and to make us more eager in the pursuit after mercie. God many times denies that mercie which thou beggest, not as though he would not hear thee, but to feel how thy heart will be drawn out towards him in prayer, to make thee more vehement and importunate in thy desires. Thus God was angry with the prayers of his people. *Psal.* 80. 4. that they might bee more fervent. God doth not delay to hear our prayers (saith *Anselme*) because he hath no mind to give, but that our desires may be kindled, and so he may take occasion to give more plentifully.

5 God may denie a thing in mercie, if thou didst too eagerlie desire the mercy, and too affectionallie set thine heart upon it; if thou lovest it too much in the expectation, thou wilt be excessive in the sanction. *Rachel* had better wanted children, which shee so impetuously desired; for she had a child, and died in child-bed. God turns mercies too passionallie desired, into curses, and snares to us, or else takes them away from us. And so I have answered this second Question. And that is the third and last particular; come now to application.

*Concedit quatenus
quod negat pro
pitius; multos
Deus non exau
dit ad voluntatem,
ut exaudiat
ad salutem.*

Act. 1. 7, 8.

*Aut scitis Deus
quod petimus,
aut quod novit
utilius.*

Psal. 80. 4.
*Non differt Deus,
quod dare
non vult, sed ut
aucto desiderio
abundantius
dare possit.*
Anselme.

Use 1.

Use 1 Consider this, O all you wicked and ungodly men; Consider how far you are from having your prayers heard; What, Will not a father hear his child when he praies to him coldly and remissly, and will he heare a slave? If God will not heare the remiss praier of a godly man, dost thou think he will hear the praiers of a wicked man? If God will not hear his peoples praiers at all times, notwithstanding they are in a state of friendship, will God hear thy praiers, O wicked man, that art in a state of enmity against him? If God will not hear the praiers of his own people, which are sometimes his delight, dost thou think he will hear thy praiers, which are alwaies an abomination to him.

2 This should put an holy awe upon the hearts of all godly men; what though you are in a state of favour with God, though this will carry your souls to heaven, yet this will not bring you a return of your praiers. You must have your hearts rightlie qualified, before God will give a return of thy prayers. And thus much for the second Doctrine, and also for the negative condition.

I come now to the condition positive, to which returns of praier are annexed: *Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needs.* From which part of the text, you may observe this Doctrine:

Doctrine 3.

That the people of God must not content themselves with being in a state of favour and friendship with God, but they also must labour after this holy importunity in prayer, before they can have their prayer accepted.

In the handling of this Doctrine, I shall proceed in this method.

- 1 I shall answer an objection that stands in the way.
- 2 I shall shew what this importunity is.
- 3 At what times God workes this in his people.
- 4 Wherein lies the difference between an holy importunity, and a naturall importunity.
- 5 What are the reasons why the people of God must have this importunity in praier.
- 6 How comes it to pass that so many want this holy importunity in their praiers?
- 7 What helps may be used to attein to this fervencie and importunity

portunity of spirit. And then I shall apply it by way of caution.

1 I must answer an Objection which is this, *It may be some will say, What need is there that this condition should be so much pressed, what need is there of importunity in prayer? Hath not God decreed what mercy to bestow upon me? if so, then I am sure I shall have those mercies, let me pray how I will; and on the contrary, if God hath not decreed to give me such a mercy, I shall not have them, let me pray never so well, for the decree of God is effectual, irresistible, and cannot be altered; All mine importunity cannot alter the decree of God.*

Object.

For answer to this, I shall propound three things to your consideration.

Sol.

1 We have not to do to search into the secret will of God; we are to minde the revealed will of God, and not the secret; It concerns not us to know what God will do, but what God would have us to do. *Deut. 29 29. Secret things belong to God, but revealed things to us and to our children;* we know not any thing of the decree and counsell of God, but onely as he is pleased to reveal it.

Deut. 29. 29.

Though God can give a mercy without praier, yet he hath not any where promised to give it without praier. Praier is the meanes that God hath appointed us to use for the obtaining of mercie.

3 The decree of God must not make us to be remits in pray-
er; for God hath decreed not onely the end, but also the means;
as God hath decreed to give thee mercie, so he hath also decreed
that thou shouldest pray for it. And therefore wheresoever the
decree or purpose of God is mentioned, it is used as an argument
to stir up the people of God to praier. *For thou, O Lord of hosts,
God of Israel, hast revealed to thy servants saying, I will build thee
an house, therefore hath thy servant found in his heart to pray this
prayer unto thee. And now (O Lord God) thou art that God, and
thy words be true, and thou hast promised this goodnesse unto thy
servant. Therefore now let it please thee to blesse the house of thy
servant, that it may continue for ever before thee. For thou (O
Lord God) hast spoken it, and with thy blessing let the house of thy
servant be blessed for ever.* You see here God had purposed and
promised to blesse the house of David, and to continue it for

2 Sam. 7. 27,
18, 19.

Gen. 15. 5.

Gen. 25. 21.

Object.

Sol.

ever; Doth this make *David* remiss in praier? Doth *David* argue, what need I pray for this mercie, seeing God is resolved to give it? No, *David* takes this hint, and useth it to good purpose in his praier. Another instance you have in *Isaac*. God had decreed, and promised that the seed of *Abraham* should be multiplied as the stars of the Heavens, Gen. 15. 5. and that this promise should be accomplished in *Isaac*. Did this make *Isaac* neglect praier? No, for we read, Gen. 25. 21. *Isaac* intreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren, and the Lord was intreated of him, &c. Though God had promised, that in *Isaac* all the nations of the earth should be blessed, yet *Isaac* betakes himself to praier to God, for the accomplishment of that mercie that was decreed and promised.

But you will say, Suppose God hath decreed he will not give me the mercy I pray for, what benefit is it to me to pray for it?

Answer,

1 It is more then any man doth know, that God hath decreed he will denie thee the mercie thou askest.

2 If it be so that God hath decreed not to give thee the mercie thou praieest for, yet God will give thee the return of praier into thy bosome; though it may be he will not give thee the particular thing thou desirest. And thus I have dispatcht the first thing, I have answered the Objection.

The second particular is this, *What is this holy importunity?*

Quest.
What is holy
importunity.

Answer.

Ἰαὐὰ γὰρ τὴν
ἀναιδέειαν.

I answer in generall. The word in the Originall signifies impudence, or want of shame. It is a Metaphor taken from Beggars, who are impudentlie importunate, and take no deniall; if you denie them once, they will ask you again, and again, and never leave till they get what they desire. It is a gathering together of all the affections of the soule, stirring them all up in praier, whereby the soul is to earnestlie desirous after the good it wants, that it will not rest, nor leave off the dutie, untill he do finde some return. This is meant, Rom. 12. 12. *Continuing instant in praier.* The Originall word is very emphaticall; It notes not onely to persevere, but to persevere and continue with strength, to ingage all a mans possibilitie in the work. It notes utmost instance and importunitie: It is a phrase borrowed from Dogs, that when they are hunting, will not cease following the game, till they have got

Rom. 12. 12.
πρὸς κατὰ
ἐννύτης.

its: So a godlie man will pursue God in duty, and never leave till he find the mercy he begs from him.

Thus did holy *Jacob*, *Gen. 32. 26.* God said, let me go, for the day breaketh: And he said, I will not let thee go unless thou blesse me.

So it is said of *Elias*, *James 5. 17.* He prayed earnestly. In the Greek, It is, *in praying, he prayed*; to shew that a Christian when he is praying, should yet pray, should pray more earnestly, hee should be as it were in agonie in praier. It was said of *Augustine* in his preaching, that he never left preaching, till he found he had done some good upon the hearts of his hearers. So must you pray, and continue praying, and doe not give over, till you finde some good done upon your hearts, till you finde sin weakened, and graces strengthened: This is the holy importunity that is here spoken of. And so much for the second particular.

The third particular is this.

When doth the Lord worke in the hearts of his people, this holy importunity, what seasons are they wherein the people of God are most importunate?

I answer.

1 God works this holy importunity in the hearts of his people at their first conversion, then is the time when they are most earnest after God in duties. *Augustine* tels us it was so in his time, first Converts were most fervent, and affectionate towards God, in dutie, when they were first brought from the state of nature, into the state of grace. At the first taste of the excellencie of grace, they are much ravished with it, because of the newnesse of the conditions; new things do most affect men.

2 There is the most holy importunity in a man, when he lives under the clearest apprehension, and assurance of Gods love in Christ. *Psal. 42. 4.* When I remembered these things, I pour out my soul in me: when he remembered, and considered the marks and tokens of Gods grace in him, and love to him, this made him importunate.

A Christian may be compared to a Marigold, which while the Sun shines upon it, opens it self, but afterwards shuts. Christians, when the Sun of Gods favour shines upon them, their souls are enlarged, their affections inflamed towards God; but when God hides his face, they are troubled, their hearts are strighted, and they

Gen. 32. 26.

James 5. 17.

προσυχῇ
προσυχάτο.

Quest.

When are Gods people most importunate?

Ans. 1.

Plurimi novitate conversionis ferventes erant.

Psal. 42. 4.

they cannot pray as they used to do. It is said of the Nightingale, that when she thinks any one is neer, she sings more sweetly then when she is alone in the Wood. The soul when it sees that God is near it, and that his favour is towards it, then it sings most sweetlie, then it praies most ferventlie; but when the love of God is clouded, and the soul left as it were alone, then the affections flag, and grow remiss in praier.

3 Another time when the people of God are importunate, is when the time for the accomplishment of a promise growes near. This we finde in *Daniel*, when he understood by books, the number of the yeares whereof the Word of the Lord came to *Jeremias* the Prophet, that he would accomplish 70. yeares in the desolation of *Jerusalem*, then he set his face to seek the Lord by prayer and supplication. *Daniel* praied at other times, but then he was most importunate when the promise is near the accomplishment, then he was most fervent. To the same purpose is that, *Jer. 29. 13.* *Then shall you call upon me, and ye shall seek for me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your hearts.* During the seventy yeares, the Jewes did not expresse any holy importunitie towards God, which is the reason of that expression, *Dan. 9. 13.* *Though all this evil is come upon us, yet made we not our prayer before the Lord our God, &c.* But when the 70 yeares were come near to an end, the Jewes praied more the last yeare, then they did all the seventie yeares before. Therefore said God, *I know my thoughts that I have towards you, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, so give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you.* Therefore when you see the mercies for a Familie, or a Nation wanting, if thine heart be indifferent, that thou dost not care whether thou praieest or not, then you may conclude that mercy will be long before it comes. But if you find that God drawes out thine heart for mercie, if God stir up thy desires, and work this holy importunity in thine heart, it is an argument that mercy is near; for when praier is in thine heart, mercy is at the door.

4 Another time when the people of God are most importunate in praier, is, when they are most drawn off from the world, when they are most free from worldly distractions. The same word in the Hebrew, signifies both meditation and praier; to shew,

Dan. 9. 2. 3.

Jer. 29. 13.

Dan. 9. 13:

Jer. 29. 11, 12.

shew, that when the heart hath been drawn off from the world by meditation, then it is in a fit posture for prayer.

5 Another time, is when they walk most closely with God. He that lives carelesslie, will not pray importunately. Therefore Job saith, *If iniquity be in thine hands, put it away, so shalt thou lift up thine heart, &c.* to note that iniquity entertained and countenanced in the soule, is the great hinderer of the lifting up of the heart; the great cooler of importunity.

6 Another time is in deep and bitter afflictions, then the people of God are most importunate in their prayers, *Psal. 130. 1, 2. Out of the deeps have I cried unto thee, Lord hear the voice of my supplication. So Psal. 142. 1, 2. I cried unto the Lord with my voice, — I poured out my complaint before him; I shewed before him my trouble. So it is said of the Jewes, Psal. 107. 6. They cried unto the Lord in their trouble. — And the same words are repeated, ver. 13, 19, 28. When trouble and great distresses was upon the Jewes by Senacherib, it is said, For this cause Hezekiah the King, and the Prophet Isaiah, the son of Amos, praised and cried to Heaven. So it is said of Manasseh, When he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly, — and praised unto him, &c. So said that good woman, 1 Sam. 1. 15. I am a woman of a sorrowfull spirit, and have poured out my soul before the Lord. Thus it was with the whole Church, Isa. 26. 9. With my soule have I desired thee in the night: yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgements are abroad, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. And that is the last season, wherein the people of God use to be importunate with God in prayer. And so much for the third thing.*

Job 11. 13.

Psal. 130. 1, 2.

Psal. 142. 1, 2.

Psal. 107. 6.

2 Chro. 32. 20.

2 Chron. 33. 12, 13.

1 Sam. 1. 15.

Isa. 26. 9.

The third Sermon.

Luk 11. 8.

I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will give unto him as many as he needeth.

Difference between holy and naturall importunity, in seven things.



TH E fourth particular is this; Wherein lies the difference betwixt that holy importunity in the hearts of Gods people, and the seeming importunity which flowes from the gifts of nature?

Ans. It lies in these seven things.

Psal. 143, 6, 7.

I An holy importunity makes a man restless till his prayers be heard, *Psal. 143, 6, 7. I stretch forth mine hands unto thee. My soul thirsteth after thee as a thirsty land; bear me speedily, my spirit faileth; hide not thy face from me, lest I be like them that go down into the pit. As a thirsty land. A thirsty land is never satisfied till it gets raine. So Psal. 119, 20. My soul breaks for the longing it hath.*

Psal. 119, 20.
Psal. 42, 1.

*Psal. 42, 1. As the hart pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after thee, O God. The Hart never rests, never gives over running, till it come to the water. Such is the importunity of a godly man, he is never quiet, never satisfied till his prayers be returned into his bosom. But it is otherwise with an hypocrite, he prays for mercy, for pardon of sin, but hee can rest contented, though God doth not hear him; he can beg grace, but he can be very well satisfied without grace, *Pro. 13, 4. The soul of the sluggard desires and hath nothing, but the soul of the diligent makes it fat.**

Prov. 13, 4.

Psal. 4, 6.

2 An holy importunity is known by this, That it makes a man more earnest for spiritual, then temporall mercies. This hath been the temper of Gods people, *Psal. 4, 6. There be many that say, Who will shew us any good; but, Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.* Observe the difference between Davids and wicked mens tempers: Their great question and desire was, Who would shew them any good, any temporall good? Who would give them the increase of corn and wine? But Davids heart breathed after other things, after Gods favour, and the light of his countenance. So *Psal. 143, 6, 7, 8. I stretch forth my hands unto thee, — my soul thirsteth after thee. Psal. 63, 1. O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth after thee, my flesh longeth after thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is. David was in a wilderness, he wanted water: One would have thought he should have sought God for water: But you see Davids desire runs in another channell; he thirsted more for God then for water, he more desired spirituall advantages, then temporall:*

Psal. 143, 6, 7, 8
Psal. 63, 1.

porall enioiments, This importunity makes a man more to endeavour against sin then affliction; more to desire saving grace, then common mercies. But now the heart of an hypocrite, is more desirous of temporall, then spirituall mercies. You read in *Hosea 7. 14.* *They have not cried unto me with their heart, when they howled upon their beds; they assemble themselves for corn and wine, and they rebell against me.* They howled, for what? Was it for grace and spirituall blessings? No, it was for corne, and wine, and oil; not for grace, not for acquaintance with God. Another instance you have, *Acts 8.* *Simon Magus* offered money to purchase the holy Ghost. What was his end in desiring the Holy Ghost? Was it to obtain a spirituall mercy? No, but it was that he might work miracles. And farther, when *Peter* put him upon the begging of a spirituall mercy, *verse 22.* *Pray God, if perhaps the thoughts of thine heart may be forgiven thee.* But *Simon Magus* followed not *Peters* rule, he had no great desire of the pardon of sin, or any spirituall mercy; but he praises, that none of those things which *Peter* had spoken might come upon him, *ver. 24.* That is, that his monie might not perish, nor he perish with it, that his gifts might not perish; this was his great request and desire.

Hosea 7. 14.

Acts 8.

3 An holy importunity of Gods people, is more in sensibleness of the inward affections of the heart, then in the outward expressions of words, *Psal. 38. 9.* *All my desire is before thee, and my groanings are not hid from thee.* *Dauids* heart panted and failed him, *ver. 10.* but not a word of expressions, though his expressions were very good, *Rom. 8. 26.* *The spirit helps our infirmities with sighs and groans that cannot be uttered.* It is said, *Rev. 5. 8.* *The four and twenty Elders had golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the Saints.* They are called odours for their sweetness, golden, for their excellencie; and vials, which are vessels of large extent in the belly, but narrow-mouthed; The hearts of Gods people are like vials, many times enlarged within, when they are streightened in their words and expressions. There are many times most dilated desires in the hearts of the Saints, and yet they are so narrow mouthed, that they are not able to utter. But now it is otherwise with hypocrites, they have more in the expression, then in the action. It was Gods complaint against the *Jewes* of old, *They draw nigh to God with their lips; when their*

Psal. 38. 9.

Rom. 8. 26.

Revel. 5. 8.

Hsa. 29. 13.

hearts

hearts are far from him. An hypocrite indeed performs duty, but his duties never reach to his heart: They are like a pot that is hot at top, but cold at bottom.

Cant. 2.14.

4 An holy importunitie makes a man more enlarged before God in secret, then before men in publick. *O my Dove, that art in the clefts of the rocke, in the secret places of the stairs; let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely.* The voice of Christs Church is sweet,

Cant. 8.13.

even then when she is in secret, when none but God beholds her, *Cant. 8.13. Thou that dwellest in the gardens, the companions bearken to thy voice; cause me to heare it.* But now an hypocrite doth never care to have any secret communion with God, he cares not to pray alone, and if he be brought to that, he takes no care of his heart, he curbs not his thoughts; al his care is in company, popular applause, and vain-glory. is as the wind to the sails of the Ship, that makes their affections move the faster. An hypocrite, in this regard, may be resembled to a Nightringale, which sings sweetest when any man stands neer her. So carnall men, when others are witnesses of their actions, then they put forth the utmost of their ability. They are of *John's* temper, he was zealous only upon that condition, that others would see it.

5 This holy importunitie makes a godly man the more humble, the more enlarged he is to prayer: The reason is, because he looks upon his enlargements, not as coming from the strength of his naturall parts or abilities, but as the free gift and gracious dispensation of Gods Spirit: & so he sees he hath nothing whereof to boast; and so it makes him low in his own eyes. You know, a Violet that is one of the sweetest flowers, growes lowest in the earth. The fullest eares of Corn do most hang down. The fullest barrels make the least noise: So the most gracious heart is the most low and vile in its own apprehensions, is the neerest earth, but dust and ashes. The fuller he is of divine discoveries or enlargement, the less boasting doth he make in the World. A Ship, the heavier it is laden, the lesse it is tost with winds and waves; the more empty it is, the more it is lifted up above the waters; so a man, the more empty, the more tost to and fro with every winde of applause. Grace is, as it were, the ballast of the soul to keep down a mans spirits, and make him humble in the midst

of

of wit and parts. *Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.* Be sober, and not puffed up, doe not boast of your enlargements, Though it is true, it doth refer to another thing, yet *Byfield* refers it to prayer, and he saith, That man that praies to God, with most enlargednesse of affections towards God, that man cannot but he must watch and be sober. Sobriety is opposed to pride, for a man may be dumb with his own gifts and graces; and watchfulness is opposed to remissness, and deadness, and carelesness of spirit in the performance of duties. Thus it is with a sincere man that hath this true importunity in him. But now wicked men, if ever they have enlargements in duty, it puffs them up. It is with them as it was with *Uzziah*, *2 Chron. 26. 16.* When God had helped him marvelously, till he was strong. *But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction.* When God helps the soul of such a man in duty, it makes him to lift up himselfe against God, and be puffed up above his brethren.

1 Pet. 4.7.

6 He that hath this holy importunity in him, his desires are rather quickened then abated by denials. You find this in the woman of *Canaan*, *Mat. 15. 22.* She cried unto Christ, saying, *Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David, my daughter is grievously vexed with a Devil:* Jesus Christ takes no notice of her; *He answered her not a word, ver. 23.* There is one discouragement. One would have thought she would have desisted; but she praied again, and the Disciples besought him to send her away, *verse 23.* There was another discouragement, which would have knocked off the desires of many; but she continues her request still. Jesus Christ himselfe answers her, *I am not sent but to the lost sheep of Israel, ver. 24.* There is a third discouragement; and yet this doth not cool her affections, but she comes afresh upon Christ, shee came, and worshipped, saying, *Lord help me, verse 25.* Yet shee found another repulse, and that worse then any of the former; *It is not meet to take the childrens bread, and give it to dogs, ver. 26.* Christ you see calls her a dog; and yet all this doth not cast her off, but she takes encouragement, even from this discouraging answer: *And shee said, Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters table, ver. 27.* She was resolved she would not give over, till she got what she came for, till Christ had said, *O woman great is thy faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt,*

Mat. 15. 22.

wilt, ver. 28. Denials are to the Saints, as water to the Smiths forge, when it is sprinkled upon it, it is so far from cooling or quenching it, that it makes it burn with the greater heat: So the denials, and discouragements Gods people meet with they serve for bellows, to blow up those sparks that are in them into a flame, to make their desires stronger, their affections to burn the hotter. But now to an hypocrite, denials and discouragements, do take off the wheels of his affections, and make them to move slowly and heavilie. *Job 21. 15. What is the Almighty that we should serve him, and what profit should we have if we pray unto him?* We get no good by it, the mercies we ask, are not yet in our hands. Now this argues a sinfull impatency, and a want of holy importunity.

Job 21. 15.

Gal. 4. 6.

Levit. 9. 24.

1 Kings 18. 38.

7 Holy importunitie is kindled in the heart, by the motions and operations of Gods blessed Spirit, *Gal. 4. 6. Because you are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.* In the time of the Law, those sacrifices that were accepted, were burnt with fire from Heaven, *Lev. 9. 24. There came fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the Altar the burnt-offering.* And so in *Elijahs* time, *1 Kin. 18. 38. When Elijah had laid his sacrifice upon the Altar of the Lord, Then the fire of the Lord fell and consumed the burnt sacrifice and the wood.* So the Heathens Vestal flames were kindled with Sun-beams. The true importunity is from above, it is a fire kindled by God himselfe in the hearts of his people. But there is another importunity that comes from naturall principles, from naturall abilities, a strong memory, a profound judgement, a ready wit, a fluent tongue; and these are very advantagious to the duty. There is the gift of praier, as well as the grace of praier. Some are importunate in praier, out of fleshlie respects. Now this is but a counterfeit importunitie. And thus much for the fourth particular, the difference between holy and naturall importunity.

The

The fourth Sermon.

LUKE II. 8.

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will give unto him as many as he needeth.



HE fifth particular is this. *What are the reasons why Gods people must labour for this holy importunity in their prayers?*

I answer, 1 Because God hath tied and promised returns, not to the persons praying, but to the qualifications of their prayers. And when the Scripture makes mention of this duty of prayer, it doth also make mention of severall concomitants, that must go along with it, to make it acceptable. To instance, there are divers concomitants, which the Scripture holds forth to be necessary for the acceptance of our prayers.

1 We must pray believingly, *Heb. 11. 6. He that cometh to God must believe. Mar. 11. 24. Therefore I say unto you (saith Christ) what things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.* He doth not say; pray how you will, you shall have them; but pray in such and such manner, pray believingly, & then you shall receive; very much to this purpose is, *Jam. 1. 5. If any man want wisdom, let him aske it of God.*

Verle 6. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that waveth, is like a wave of the Sea, driven with the wind, and tossed. So that you see God looks to the manner, as well as to the matter of a performance.

2 You must pray regularly, according to the will of God.

3 Dependently rest upon Christs intercession.

4 Waitingly.

5 Preparedly; but these I shall passe by, because they do not so properly concern the point in hand.

6 We are commanded to pray earnestly, and fervently, and

The fifth particular, Why we must be importunate; Reason 1.

Concomitants of Prayer.

Heb 11 6.

Jam. 1. 5.

Psal. 55. 17.

Rom. 15. 30.

συναγωνιζα-
σθαι.
Mellum certare.

Rom. 12. 12.

τῇ προσευχῇ
προσκαρτε-
ρῆντες.

Jam. 5. 16.

δύσους ἐνερ-
γούμεν.

Acts 26. 7.

ἐν ἐκτενείᾳ.

Acts 12. 5.

προσευχῇ
ἐκτενῆς.

Col. 4. 12.

ἀγωνιζόμενος

importunately; So David did, *Psal. 55. 17. I will pray and cry aloud, and he shall hear my voice.* A full place to this purpose is, *Rom. 15. 30. Now, I beseech you brethren for the Lord Jesus Christs sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me.* The word in the Greek is very emphaticall, it is the same word that is applied to Christ, when he was in an agony, when he sweat drops of blood. He beseecheth them to contend and strive in their prayers; we are to be as it were in an agony, when we are in prayer. Prayer is not a little book-labour, it is not a lip-labour onely, but it is a raising up, and putting forth the heart and affections in the work. So, *Rom. 12. 12. Be continuing, instant in prayer.* It is a metaphortaken from dogs. A Dog of all creatures is the best able to endure hunger, he will run from place to place, and never leave till he have got his prey: so you are to hunger after God, and after mercy, and not to rest satisfied, till God doth grant the mercie you stand in need of, pray and pray, and pray againe, and fight till you overcome pray till you get an answer. Another place is, *James 5. 16. The effectually fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* The word in the originall is significant. Some expound it a working prayer; It may be interpreted a prayer well wrought in the heart, and so a prayer that comes from the heart. A prayer wrought in us by the Spirit, and carried on by faith. Another place to the same purpose is, *Acts 26. 7. Unto which promise our twelve Tribes instantly serving God.* The word is rendered by some, continually, daily, constantlie; but it signifies most properlie a serving of God with the utmost of ones strength, to be as a man upon a rack, to use the very all of their power; or it may be it is borrowed from one that runs a race, wherein men stretch out their limbs to the utmost. The word is the same here that is used, *Acts 12. 5. Prayer was made without ceasing*, or (as it is in the margin of your book, and more agreeable to the originall) *instant and earnest prayer was made for Peter*. The prayers of Gods people were to earnest, that they opened the prison doors for him. So *Col. 4. 12. Epaphras who is one of you, a servant of Christ saluteth you, alwaies labouring fervently for you in Prayers.* So that you see, it is not every prayer that God is satisfied with, no nor Gods people neither, it is not every prayer that shall prevail with God; there must be importunity in it.

So much for the first reason.

2 We must have this holie importunitie in praier, because there is much strength and importunitie against thee, when ever thou goest upon thy knees. There is strength against you, both from without and from within.

Reason 2.

1 From without; There are the powers of darkness that stand against you, and resist you. As it was with *Abraham*, *Gen. 15. 11* When *Abraham* was sacrificing, fowles came down upon the sacrifice, but *Abraham* drove them away. *Deodate* saith, This is a signe that the Devils, those infernall spirits labour to disturb us in holy duties; as the good Angels behold us in our assemblies, and rejoyce to see our order, so the wicked Angels labour to disturb us and molest us.

Gen. 15. 11.

2 There is strength against us from within. There is that in thy heart that will carry thee more violently from God, then the good motions in thee can bring thee to God; there is a forcible withdrawing of the heart from God, *James 1. 14.* Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed. When you have no will to do good, even then you have a will to do evil; nay, there are wils of the flesh, and lusts of the flesh; shall we not have haile a will for God, when we have many wils for sin? You see therefore it is not without good reason that we should be thus importunate in praier.

James 1. 14.

πειρασμοὶ
σαρκὸς, ἐπι-
θυμίας σα-
ρκός.

And so much for the fifth particular.

The sixth particular is this: *What are the reasons why so many people do want this holy importunity, whereas so many pray, and so few pray with that earnestness and suggestiveness of heart, and affection that is required?*

Quest.
Why is few
importunate
in praier.

I answer, that comes to passe for many reasons.

1 This comes to passe from the injections, and instigations of Satan. The Devil acts not onely powerfullie, but also subtiltie and craftie; he will endeavour to divert you from the performance of duty, he will perswade you to neglect it. But if I may tie thou wilt say; thou wilt direct thy praier unto God, and then wilt have thine eye fixed upon God. Why now Satan will fall in with you, he will jog your arm, he will take off your eye from the mark, that you shall not be able to hit it. Thus he dealt with *Abraham*, as you heard before. Thus he dealt with *Isaiah* *Isa. 1. 16.* Now there

Reason 1.

Job 1.6.

was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.

Job 38.7.

I am not ignorant that many Interpreters, by the sons of God, do understand the Angels, because the Angels are called the sons of God. Job 38.7. but it cannot be so taken here; I will give but one reason to prove it, because the place where the Angels are, is in heaven; and if so, then the Devill must be in heaven, which is by all denied; he never was in heaven, since he was cast out of it. And therefore *Baldacius* saith, that this day was the Lords day, and by the sons of God are meant, the godly men that lived in the time and place where *Job* lived, the posterity of *Seth*. And you shall find in Scripture, this very appellation given to them, Gen. 6.2. *The sons of God saw the daughters of men*. These sons of God must needs be men, and not Angels; and so they are to be understood in this place in *Job*, the people of God met together, and came before the Lord, and Satan came also among them, hee came to hinder them and disturb them. So it was, *Zach. 3.1,2.* And he shewed me *Jothan* the high Priest standing before the Angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him; And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee; O Satan, even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee; it is not this a firebrand plucked out of the fire? You see how Satan laboured to divert the thoughts, and distract the heart of the High Priest in the performance of religious duties.

That is the first Reason.

2. This importunity is wanting in our prayers, when we know and allow ourselves in any one sin, and let it lie upon our hearts unrepented of. *Hilderham* gathers from the 51 Psalm, that all the while that *David* did lie in that sin of adultery, all the time that sin was unrepented of, the heart of *David* was shut up that hee could not pray, as he was wont to do before, and as he did after he had repented of that sin, at which time he writ that penitentiall Psalm. You had need look to your hearts, that there do not lie there any sin encouraged, and unrepented of; for be sure of this, if thy prayer doe not make thee leave sinning, thy sin will make thee leave praying.

That is the second Reason of the want of importunity.

3. Another Reason is this, because many take unfit seasons for the

the performance of duty. It is the judgement of that learned and reverend man of God, Master *Bolton*, that the taking of unfit seasons for the performance of prayer, doth more obstruct and hinder this holy importunitie in prayer, then all the suggestions and instigations of Satan.

Now there are three unfit seasons for the performance of this duty.

1 When the body is sleepe, and fit for nothing but to take its rest. A sleepe and sluggish temper, is a canker to eat out many sweet affections, *Cant* 3.1. *By night upon my bed I sought him, but I found him not.* Some interpreters take occasion hence, to speak against late prayers.

2 Another unfit season is, when the heart is fill'd with worldly cares and distractions, and the incumbrances of this present life; many men are guilty of this, they will so clog themselves with the cares of this life, that they cannot have a praying time free from them. Some men will be down upon their knees, before the things of this world are out of their minds; and so they have no time to consider, or meditate, or to put the heart in a fit frame for that work. You know we are to *attend upon the Lord without distraction*, *1 Cor.* 7. 35. It was the fault of those Jewes in hearing, that when they came to hear the Word, *their hearts did go out after their covetousness*, *Ezek.* 33. 31. That is another season unfit for prayer.

3 Another season is, when we are under passionate distempers. When tumultuous passions are up, holy affections are down, *1 Tim.* 2. 8. *I will that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting* so shew that where there is wrath, the duty of prayer cannot be performed in an acceptable manner. And of the same mind was the Apostle *Peter*, who therefore gives this counsell, *1 Pet.* 3. 7. *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered.* The Apostle wisely foresaw, that if a man and wife lived in discontent and trouble, then their prayers would be hindered; and therefore he adviseth them to prevent the hinderance of their prayers, by avoiding occasions of discontent. And that is the third season, wherein people are
unfit

unfit for praier: so they are diverted from that fervency and importunity they might have in their praiers. We should therefore chuse the fittest seasons for praier. It is said of *Luther* by *Vitus Theodorus*, who was present with him at *Coburge*, and many times heard him at his private praiers, in a letter of his to *Melancthon*, That there was no day passed over his head, wherein *Luther* did not spend three hours at least in praiers; & those (not hours that he could best spare, unseasonable houres, but) such houres as were the fittest for his study. And that was the reason, that *Luther* was very importunate in his praiers, as the same Author informs us; Good God, with how much reverence did I hear him pray! With how much boldnesse and confidence, &c. And on the contrary, one reason why men have so little of this holy importunity, is for want of taking fit seasons for the work.

Reason 4.

4. Another reason of the want of this holy importunitie is, the dislike and neglect of praier in your Christian course. Many there are that pray sometimes, and leave off praying again; now this doth very much dull mens affections in praier. There is a Proverb, *Use makes perfectness*; I am sure it is so in the duty of praier; let a Christian pray often, and he will come to pray well, and to pray with much enlargedness of heart; and let him leave off praier, and he will find his heart exceedingly streitned. Take a Key, if you use it frequently, it will be bright, but if you lay it aside, it will soon grow rusty; thus will it be with a mans heart, use praier much, keep it close to the performance of duty, it is the way to have thy heart bright. Let this Key of praier, which doth open heaven, be used, it will be kept bright, and thy praier will enter into heaven; but let this Key of praier be laid aside, and do not thou often use it, and it will quickly grow rusty again; thy praiers and performances will not be able to enter heaven, and thou wilt not be able to perform duty in that manner that God expecteth. If thou dost not watch unto praier with all carefulness, thou wilt lose thy zeale and fervent affection, and thy holy desires after God in duty. As it is with a Pump, use it every day, and water will come, but if you forbear the use of it two or three daies, water will neither come so easilie nor so plentifully. If you do not pump out your holy desires every day, they will quickly flag and grow remiss. Physicians observe concerning the teeth, that that

side

side of the teeth that is not used, is most subject to rheumes and distillations. That heart that is not inured to prayer and holy duties is most subject to Satans instillations and suggestions. This is the fourth reason.

5 The fifth reason why this importunity is wanting, is this, because men tie themselves to prescript forms of prayer. I do not say, that it is unlawfull to use set forms of prayer; we find that Jesus Christ himself used a form, *Mat. 26, 39.* Christ went and said, *Father, if it be possible, let this cup passe from me, ver. 42. He went again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, thy wil be done, v. 44. He went away again & prayed, saying the same words.* To shew, that it is lawfull to use set forms of prayers, but not alwaies. You are to strive for the spirit of prayer. A man that will use his crutches constantly, shall go lame all the daies of his life. You live in an age, wherein religion is much professed, and the Gospell is fully made known. Do not content your selves with forms, labour for the spirit of prayer, thereby you may go to God, and spread before him your wants and necessities, and beg those mercies, that are most suitable to your wants and exigencies. Forms indeed will teach you to beg pardon for sin, in generall; but you must beg pardon for particular sins. You must not onely beg mercy in generall, but you must also beg those particular mercies that are most suitable to you; and this set forms are defective in, which yet is the main work in prayer. He that ties himselfe alwaies to another mans form, will not be able to pray alone, but weakly, and coldly, and formally.

This is the fifth Reason.

6 Another ground of this importunity, is a giving way to an accustomed continuance in a sleight and carelesse performance of duties; this enervates the affections, and emasculates the spirits; what men are accustomed to, that they get an habit of, so that they cannot do the contrary. As a Carriers horse, that is used to a dul and slow pace, cannot go out of it. The lessening of Acts makes Habits more remiss. That is the last reason. And so much shall suffice for answer to the sixth Question.

Reason 5.

Mar. 26. 39.

Reason 6.

The fifth Sermon.

LUKE II, 8.

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will give unto him as many as he needeth.

THE fourth particular is this: By what helps may a man attain to this holy importunitie in praier?

For answer, I shall lay down six or seven Theologicall helps, by which a man may come to attain this holy importunitie.

I Possesse thine heart with an awfull fear of the Almighty God. This was the ground of *David's* importunity, as you may see, *Psal. 5. ver. 3.* he saith, *My voice shall thou hear in the morning.* And in the leventh verse, you will find this holy fear did lie at the bottom; *But as for me, I will come into thine house, in the multitude of thy mercy; and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy Temple.* *David* came to duty with a strong impression of Gods greatnesse and dreadfulnessse. So it is the advice of the Apostle, that if we would serve God acceptably, we must do it with reverence and godly fear, *Heb. 12. 28.* That fore-cited Author, *Vitus Theodorus* writes concerning *Luther*, That he praied with so much confidence, as if he had been speaking with his friend and familiar, and yet with so much reverence, as one that considered the great distance between God and him. I may allude to that place, *Isa. 60. 5.* though the words are spoken to another purpose, *Thy heart shall fear and be enlarged* An holy feare breeds an holy care. If a man once comes to this, that he is fearless of God, he will quickly be careless in praier, *Job 15. 4. Yea, thou castest off fear, and restrainest prayer before God.* A man that doth cast off the fear of God, doth soon cease to pray unto God: He that fears God most, that man will certainly pray to God best. That is the first help,

Psal. 5. 3.

Verse 7.

*Tanta fiducia
ut cum amico,
santa reveren-
tia ut cum Deo.*

Job 15. 4.

2 Another help or means, to get this holy importunity, is this; 2 *Help.*
 To recollect thy thoughts by holy meditation, before thou comest to this weighty duty of prayer to God; and upon this ground we find meditation and prayer to be put together. *Psal. 5. 1, 2.* *Psal. 5. 1, 2.*
Give ear to my words, O Lord, and consider my meditation, give ear unto my prayer, O God, and my King; for unto thee will I pray.
 Davids prayer you see is ushered in with meditation. The same word in the Hebrew, signifies both to meditate and to pray. You find concerning Isaac, *Gen. 24. 26.* *Isaac went out into the fields to meditate,* some read it, *to pray*, others translate, it is likely he did both first meditate and then pray: Bee much employed in this work of meditation, if you would have your hearts much enlarged in prayer. Meditate into whose presence you come; what a glorious God he is, before whom you are to appear.

2 Meditate in whose name you are to come and to pray, by whom you must have access to the throne of grace.

3 Meditate what chief mercies you want, and are to beg, what grace you would have strengthened, what lusts you would have quelled, what doubts you would have satisfied, what sins you would have pardoned, in a word, what blessings you would have God to bestow upon you. The meditation of these things, must needs give a man more scope, and stir up a mans affections in prayer.

3 If you would get this holy importunity, you must recall 3 *Help.*
 your thoughts from worldly and distracting cares, when you come to prayer. The Apostle therefore doth exhort the *Corinthians*, *1 Cor. 7.* to free themselves from, and rid their hands of the cares of the world, and he gives this as a reason, that they may attend upon the Lord without distraction. The cares of the world will eat out that good that is in the hearts of men, will rob a man of that freedom and enlargement, that otherwise he might have in prayer. *Anselme* as he was walking in the fields, saw a shepherds boy tie a stone to a birds leg, and as the bird sought to flie up, ever and anon the stone pulled it down again. The spirituall interpretation that he partly made, and that wee may make, is this; when the soul would mount aloft in prayer, and grow fervent, the cares of the world pluck it down, and cool it. And therefore you must labour to free your selves from these incumbrances.

ces. You must do as *Abraham* did when he went to sacrifice, he left his servants and cattel at the bottom of the hill: so when you go to offer to God the sacrifices of Praier, you must get above the impediments and distractions of this present life. That is the third Help.

4 Help.
Col. 4. 2.

Another way to get this holy importunity, is to watch the heart in praier, *Col. 4. 2. Continue in praier, and watch in the same with thanksgiving.* There is a watching to praier, and a watching in praying. A watching to praier is, when a man watcheth his heart, and sees that he doth not omit duties; and there is a watching in praier, of which I am now speaking. Now there are four enemies, that a man must watch against in praier.

1 Watch against drowsinesse of body. This is a great impediment of praier, and we have great need to watch against it.

2 Watch against a deadness and dulness of Spirit, against a flat and low temper, that is a great hinderance of importunity.

3 Watch against Satanicall suggestions; Satan is alwaies ready to assaue thee, he watcheth to disturb and molest you in your praiers, you had need watch to counter-work him.

4 You must watch from secular distractions. All these Adversaries you must watch against, and that is the way to get this holy importunitie into your hearts.

5 Help.

Psal. 103. 1.

5 If you would get this holy importunitie, you must labour to stir up all your affections, when you come to pray. This you find was the practice of holy *David*, *Psal. 103. 1. Bless the Lord O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name.* See how this good man doth muster together all the faculties of his soule, how he calls up all his strength, all that he is or can do to set forth the Name of God. So the Apostle *Peter*, in his first Epistle, *Chap. 1. Verse 13.* exhorts those to whom he writes, to gird up the loins of their mindes.

1 Pet. 1. 13.

A Christian going towards heaven, is compared to a man that is going a journie; now a man that is going a journie, he girds up his cloths together about his loins, that nothing may hinder him in his journie. To this the Apostle alludes, when he bids them gird up their loins. So the like you have, *Luke 17. 8.*

Luke 17. 8.

Gird up thy selfe, and serve me. It is an expresseion of a Master to his servant. God is our Master, we are his servants, we are to doe his work while we are in the world. To that end let us gird up our

our loins, let us gird up our affections together, that we may be the more fit for, and the more vigorous in the work. A disinc't and ungirt mind, is not fit for praier; in ancient times at the first assemblings, and Church-meetings, the Deacons cried, Let us pray, Let us attend. There are many that pray, and do not attend to praier, many pray, as if they praied not; if therefore we would pray indeed, we must attend to it, we must stir up al that is within us, to call upon the name of the Lord.

Oremus, attendamus,

6 If you would get this holy importunitie, then you must store your hearts with fulnesse of matter, when thou goest to praier; it is emptinesse of spirit, that causeth deadnesse of heart.

6 *Help.*

7 If you would get this holy importunitie, bemoan the deadnesse and dulnesse of thy heart. This was the course that holy David took, *Psal. 38. 9. My desires, O Lord, are before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee.* So it was the practise of the Church, *Isa. 63. 17. O Lord, why hast thou made us to erre from thy waies, and hardened our hearts from thy feare.* So it was the way that Ephraim went in, *Jer. 31. 18. I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself. Thou hast chastised me, and I was chastised, as a Bullock unaccustomed to the yoke.* — *Vers 19. Surely after that I was turned, I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh: I was ashamed, yea, even confounded, because I did hear the reproach of my youth.* God doth love to hear his people mourning over, and bewailing their wants and weaknesses, and that is one necessary requisite in an acceptable praier. Bewail therefore thy dulness, consider that praier without this holy importunitie, is like a messenger without legs, as an arrow without feathers, an advocate without a tongue. Saint Jerom complained very much of his distractions and dulnesse in praier, and chid himself. What dost thou think that *Jonah* praied thus when he was in the whales belly, or *Daniel* when he was among the lions, or the thief when he was upon the Crois? Bemoan your want of Importunity, if you would get this holy importunitie. And so much shall suffice for the helps or means to get importunitie.

Isa. 63. 17.

Jer. 31. 18.

Siccine putas orasse Jonam, sic Danielelem inter leones, sic latronem in cruce?

And so I have dispatched al those particulars propounded in the beginning, I now come to the Application of the point.

I shall apply it by way of Caution, to prevent severall mistakes in the world about this holy importunitie. And there are two

use of Caution.

sorts of mistakes, there are some that think they have this importunitie, when they have it not. And there are others that think they have not this importunitie, when indeed they have it. Both these mistakes I must labour to rectifie.

1 Caution,
To those that
think they
have importu-
nity upon
false grounds.

1 There are some that think they have this importunitie when they have it not. Every man by nature is proud of his own parts and abilities, and apt to think that he hath more grace then indeed he hath. And here there are four mistake, or if you wil, four grounds of this great mistake. Many conceit they have importunitie, when indeed they have it not.

- 1 Because they are fluent in their expressions of praier.
- 2 Because they have some stirring of the affections in praier.
- 3 Because God gives them the mercy they ask.
- 4 Because they pray by heart and not by book: Now all these are false grounds, and therefore I shall endeavour to disprove them in order.

First false
ground con-
futed.

The first ground of this deceit, is this. There are some that conceive they have this importunitie, because they have multitude of words, and varietie of expressions in praier.

Now this is no just ground for a man to conclude, that he hath this holy importunitie, in four cases.

1 In case expressions come from the strength of naturall gifts and parts, and not from saving grace. A man may have a strong memory, and volubilitie of tongue, and good naturall abilities, and yet all this while fall short of this gracious importunitie.

2 In case thou art full in expression, but empty in affection. There are many men whose words do out-slip their hearts, and their expressions exceed their affections. So did they, *Isa. 29. 13. For as much as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me.* Some men are like boiling water, when it boils fastest, and boils out at the top, then there is nothing at the bottom; All their praiers are at the top, in their mouth, and not in their heart and affections. Their affections do carry equipage with their words.

3 In case thy importunate expressions be more used in company, then in secret, it is a sign thou hast not this holy importunitie, but it comes from popular applause. It is not so with the people of God, Christ speaks to his people, *Can. 8. 13. Thou that dwellest*

dwellst in the gardens, the companions bearken to thy voice, cause me to heare it; to shew that they should not onely pray, and be importunate when the companions hearken to their voice, when they are in company, but even then when no eie sees them, when no eare hears them, when none is present, but God alone, God expects that we should pray in secret, as well as in company.

4 In case thy fluency of expressions do make thee conceited of thy selfe, and of thy gifts, and to slight the gifts of other men, this is an argument thou hast not this holy importunitie, for that makes a man humble. and low in his own eies. When a man comes to despise other men, and exalt himselfe above his brethren, this is a token thy importunitie comes not from a right principle. And so I have disproved the first false ground, upon which many conceit they have this importunity.

2 Another false ground upon which men conceive they have this importunitie, when they have not, is this, Because they finde in themselves some stirrings in their affections in praier to God. But this is no just ground for that opinion in these cases.

A second false ground confuted.

1 In case thine affections are more stirred up, for the removal of affliction on thee, then corruption within thee. As it was with the Mariners in *Jonah*, they cried mightily unto God, but what was it for? not that they might be delivered from their sins and corruptions, but that God would bring them safe out of that tempest wherein they were.

2 In case thine affections be kindled by a false principle, as by popular applause, or vain glory, and not by the Spirit of God.

3 In case thine affections are more drawn out after pardoning mercie, then subduing grace. A man whose conscience is awakened, may be so far roused with the fear of hell, that he may be very earnest to have sin pardoned, out of a meer principle of self-love.

4 If these stirrings be fading. There are many that have a flashing in their affections, that have no standing affections in their hearts. They are like a man in a Fever, that when the distemper is on him, he may be stronger by farre than hee is in his ordinary course, now this is not the naturall strength of the man, but only the violence of his distemper; and the decay of nature. Just so the violence that some men have, doth not argue a strength of grace,

A third
ground con-
futed.

grace, but a decrease of grace rather. And so much for the second ground of that mistake.

A third ground upon which many mistake, is this: Because God gives them the mercy they ask: Now they think God would not give them what they ask, if he did not accept their prayers: But neither is that a good ground, and that for these reasons.

1 God may give you mercy, not as a return of prayer, but as a fruit of his generall providence, whereby he doth take care for all his creatures; God giveth meat even unto the Ravens that cry unto him. The Lord gives to every thing their meat in due season. God heares the cries of the meanest of all his creatures in the time of need.

2 God may hear thee, and grant thy request in wrath, and not in mercy: So it was with the Israelites; they were weary of that government that God had set over them, and they were very importunate to have a King; Nothing would satisfie them but a King. They refused to hear the voice of *Samuel*, and said, Nay, but we will have a King. Well, God hears their request, and grants it, & gives them a King. Might they thence conclude, surely their prayers were accepted of God, because God did give them what they desired? No, God tels us the quite contrary, *Hos. 13. 11. I gave thee a King in mine anger. So in the 78. Psalm, The Israelites were very desirous of meat; God heard them, ver. 29, 30, 31. So they did eat, and were filled, for he gave them their own desire. They were not estranged from their lust; but while the meat was in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel;* So that Gods giving of a man the mercy he wants, is no argument to a man, to conclude that God accepts his prayers.

3 If God hath heard thee, it may be it is in temporall favours, but not in spirituall mercies. God gives thee a temporall mercy, but he denies thee spirituall mercies. It may be thou hast begg'd riches, and God hath granted thee this request, to make thee rich in the world; It may be thou hast desired honour, and thou art raised to places of honour; But remember thou dost beg Christ, thou dost beg grace and glory; if God doth not give thee these, thou shalt never see the face of God; and consider, what will all these do thee good? They will but feed thee fat for the day

day of slaughter, and make thee a sweet mortell for worms and Devils. Now consider what benefit this will be to thee, to have riches, pleasures, and worldly contentments, and they prove a snare to thee. So then it is no just ground for a man to conclude that he hath prayed aright, because God hath answered him. That is the third ground.

A fourth ground of mens presumption, of the goodness and acceptableness of their prayers, is this; they pray by heart, and not by book, they use not set forms, they pray *ex tempore*. But this also is but a false ground, as appears by these considerations.

A fourth ground confuted,

1 It is possible, and usual too, for men to pray without book, and yet without heart too. A man may pray a third way, he may pray, and yet neither pray with books, nor with heart, he may pray by the strength of naturall parts, as I told you even now.

2 A man may pray without a form, and yet make but a formall prayer. A formall prayer is not to use a form of words; for that Jesus Christ did, he prayed three times, saying the same words. A man may possibly use a form of words, and yet not be formall. And on the other side, a man may be formall, and yet not use a form of words; that is, he may pray, and yet not have his heart and affections wrought upon in that prayer.

3 Prayer is not a work of the memory, invention or expression, but a work of the heart. Prayer doth not consist in varietie of phrases, or change of the method, an expression used in prayer, but a work on the affections. God doth not account that to be a prayer, that doth not come from the heart, and is not accompanied with the heart; And therefore you find this expression concerning the Saints prayers formerly: *Hannah* poured out her soul before the Lord; and so the Psalmist, he is said to pour out his heart, and the *Israelites* are said to pour out their hearts like water before the Lord. So that this proves to be a false bottom.

And so much for the first use of Caution.

L

The

The sixth Sermon.

LUKE 11. 8.

I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will give unto him as many as he needeth.

2 Caution.
To those that
think they
have not im-
portunity
when they
have.
1 Reason con-
fured.



This may be for Caution to the godly, to prevent the mistakes of those that have this importunitie, and think they have not; Yet here also they have some seeming Reasons. I shall name them, and withall answer them.

1 Their first Reason is: Others pray better then I saith a godly man, Others perform duties with more enlargednesse; Now this reasoning is not good.

For, 1 It may be those that thou apprehendest to pray better then thou, are of a longer standing, and larger experience in the waies of God then thou art. God doth not expect any more from a man, but according to that measure of grace that he gives the man; and according to his growth and standing in grace. *Paul* was not at all discouraged, because *Epenetus* was the first fruit of *Achaia* unto *Christ*, *Rom. 16. 5.* nor at *Andronicus* and *Junia*, that were of note among the Apostles, and in *Christ* before him, ver. 7 And if *Paul* was not discouraged, why shouldst thou be discouraged to see other Christians out-strip thee? it may be they are of longer standing then thou.

2 It may be thou dost judge and compare thy selfe with others, at a great disadvantage. As first, it may be thou dost compare thy self and thy praying in secret, with the praying of others in publike: Now this is very disadvantageous; for in publike, men have not only inward, but also outward encouragements, and so thorough the corruption that is in all our hearts, they are more drawn forth at that time, then in secret.

3 It may be thou dost compare their expression with thine affection; it may be there is more in thy affections, then in all the multi-

multitude of their expressions. Thou art not to compare thy affections, with the multitude of other mens words.

3 It may be thou dost compare thy self with others, when they are at the best and highest, and thou at the worst and lowest. There is a great difference betwixt a man and himselfe, at severall times; now you judge unequally, if you compare your selfe in that manner.

3 In some cases this may be no discouragement to thee; as,
1 If thou art weaker in naturall gifts. Though good affections flow from grace, yet good expressions proceed from the goodness of naturall abilities.

2 In case thou art not of as long standing in Religion.

3 If thou hast lesser time and opportunities for prayer, by reason of necessary cares, and encumbering imployments. When *Jonah* was entered into the ship, there was a great storm, inso-much that the ship was ready to sink: now all the mariners were at prayer, every man cried to his God, but *Jonah* was fast asleep; now one would have thought, that *Jonah* had been a most stupid man; but the reason was the greatness of his journey, a little before, which caused him to be so heavy to sleep. It may be a man that hath lesse grace than thou, may pray better than thou, because he is not troubled with these wordly incumbrances, that thou art necessarilie engaged in.

4 God doth not distribute gifts and graces to all alike, God hath not appointed that all men should grow in grace alike. To this purpose I may apply, *Neh. 11. 17. Mattanah the son of Micah, the son of Zabdi, the son of Asaph, was the principall to begin the thanksgiving in prayer, and Bakkukiah the second among his brethren, and Abda the son of Shammuz the third.* God doth not intend that all should be alike in grace, or gifts; God hath his first, second, and third; one man may fall short of another, and yet all have a truth of grace, yea, all have some growth in grace. Another may pray better, and yet thou pray well; Another may pray more affectionately, and yet thou pray as acceptable in the sight of God: so much for answer to the first reason.

2 Many a poor soul may say, I can remember since I could pray better, and more largely. Now if I could pray better formerly than now, I am now grown remiss, and want this holy importunitie. But this is no sound reason; for

A second Reason confuted.

1 It may bee thou hadst formerly more affection, but lesse judgement, lesse experience, lesse spiritualloes in thy praier. It may be now thou art more sound in knowledge, thou makest a more inward progress in holinesse, thou canst now make a more inward praier to God, thou hast now more inward communion with God. Now if this be so, thou hast no cause to be discouraged. God loves a judicious praier, as well as a large and affectionate praier; you see what you want one way, you make up another way. A young Carpenter gives more blowes, and makes more chips, but an old and experienced workman doth the most and best work. A young Musician can play more quickly and nimbly upon an instrument, but an old Musician hath more skill.

2 It may be when thou hadst more affections in prayer, thou hadst more sin in praier, more pride in thy gifts, more dependance upon thy duties, more censoriousnesse of others, and many other corruptions that did accompany thy praiers, and thy affectionatenesse in them. Now though thou hast lesse affections, yet those other corruptions are in great part eaten out.

3 It may be thou hast not now so many helps and opportunities to keep up thine heart, to stir up thine affections in praier, as thou hadst formerlie. It may be thou didst formerly live under the teachings of an able and godly Minister. Now thou hast lost that opportunitie. And so there are severall other helps, that peradventure are now taken away from thee.

4 Though it is true thou art abated, and thou didst pray better formerlie then now, yet ought not this to be matter of discouragement to thee.

1 ¶ It doth not proceed from a voluntary carelesnesse.

2 If it be not accompanied with hardnesse and insensiblenesse.

3 If it bee not continued in with lazinesse and contentednesse. And so much for answer to the second Reason.

3 Another ground of doubting to the people of God, is this: They complain they have not those enlarged expressions in praier, which Gods people use to have. For answer, consider these things:

1 This hath many times been the case of Gods own people, that they have wanted expressions, they could not find a vent for their affections. Thus it was with *Hannah*, she spake in her

heart, but she was not able to exprels her selfe. So it was with holy David, *Psal. 77. 4. I am so troubled, that I cannot speake*, and yet in the first Verse of that Psalm, he tels us, *he cried unto the Lord with his voice*. Here is an heart full of praier, though hee wanted utterance.

3 It is better to have affections without expressions, then expressions without affections. God looks more to the desires of the heart, then the words of the mouth. It may be what thou wantest of expression is made up in affection.

3 It may be what is wanting in words, is made up in life; as thou art defective in expression, so thou makest a recompence in conversation; and that is the best expression that can be. It is much better to live a praier, then to exprels a praier. It is good to pray for grace, but it is better to live a life of grace. It is good to pray against sin, but it is better to live against sin.

And so much for answer to the third doubt.

A fourth ground of doubting is this: Many a disconsolate Christian is apt to say, *I am troubled with wandering thoughts; with deadness and dulness of heart in praier.*

A fourth Reason confuted.

I confels thy case is sad, and to be lamented for, and it is just matter of humiliation: Yet even here is matter of comfort.

1 If thou dost what thou canst to free thy self from wanderings before thou comest to pray.

2 If thou dost what thou canst to resist these wanderings when you are come before God in praier.

If you be sensible of these wanderings afterward. If you can say, you do these three things, your wanderings shall never bee laid to your charge.

And thus I have done with both these Uses of Caution. And so I have done with the principall Doctrine, which was this, *That an holy importunity, and earnestnesse of spirit, is a condition required in the prayers of Gods people, if they expect returns thereunto.*

There is another considerable doctrine yet behind, taken from the amplification of the concession: He asked but three loaves; but because of his importunity, he gave unto him, as many as he needed.

The observation thence is this; *That when the heart is importunate*

Doctr. 4.
God is better
then our pray-
ers.

iniate in begging mercy, God usually gives us more then we pray for.

In the handling of this Doctrine,

1 I shall prove it by Scripture-instances.

2 I shall lay down the reasons of it.

3 I shall answer some Objections, and cases of Conscience; and so I shall come to application.

1 I shall prove it by Scripture-instances.

1 You have the instance of *Hannab*, 1 Sam. 1. She begg'd a son, with much importunitie, being a woman of a sorrowfull Spirit, for want of a son; Well, God returns her an answer. *Cheremitus* observes, that *Hannab* asked a son, and God gave her a Prophet. She begg'd a son, God gave a gracious son; a son greatly beloved of God. She asked a single mercy, and God gave her a double blessing.

Petiti Filium,
accepit Prophe-
sam.

Another instance you have in *Abraham*, Gen 17. *Abraham* praied, O that *Ishmael* might live in thy sight. Well, what answer doth God return? That you have, ver. 19. *Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed, and thou shalt call his name Isaac, and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him.* It was *Abraham*'s desire that *Ishmael* might live. Now God, not only grants that, but he grants him a better mercie.

Another instance you have in the Canaanitish woman, *Mar.* 15. who did importunately beg of Christ, the life and health of her daughter. Christ answered her thus; *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.*

Now if you ask what is the reason why God deals thus with his people? I answer,

Reason 1.

1 This proceeds from the largeness and greatness of Gods power, and the riches and freeness of his grace towards us; *Eph.* 3. 20. *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we are able to aske or think, according to the power that works in us.* A man may ask of another man, and it may be, receive; but then he must not ask again: but herein appears the power and abilitie, the goodness and bounty of God; if we ask of him once or twice, he is a God that is able to give, not according to our asking onely, but above what we ask; and not only above what

what we can ask, but above what wee can ask or think. The words are so full, that they cannot well be expressed, God doth *more then excessively* God hath not a fulneis of abundance, but of redundancie; not onely of plenty, but bounty, he is better then our prayers.

2 God will do this, to relieve his people, and to supply their spirituall wants. Among the wants of Gods people, this is one, that *we do not know what we need, nor what we should pray for as we ought, Rom. 8. 26.* Therefore God supplies our wants, not only in what we ask, but in what we want, though we do not ask it nor pray for it.

So much for the Reasons. I come now to answer some Objections.

But some may say, what priviledge hath a godly man more then a wicked man, to have more to be given him then he doth ask, seeing that we read of wicked men, that *they do prosper in the world, and have more then heart can wish? Psal. 73.* I answer,

1 It is true in temporall mercies: God may give them more then the godly, and more then their heart can wish; but God doth not give them spirituall mercies: As we may see in *Balaams* God gave *Balaams* honours and riches, but *Balaam* cried out, *O that I might die the death of the righteous!* This God did not grant him. So, many wicked men do say in a generall way, *Lord, pardon my sin,* God doth not hear them. It may be a child of God may ask of God temporall mercies, and God will give him spirituall mercies; this is more then he did ask, and that much better then he gives to wicked men.

Though God doth give unto wicked men more then their hearts can wish, yet God doth not give it as any return of prayer, but only as fruits of generall and common providence, as they are his creatures, whom he will preserve.

3 God may give wicked men more then their hearts can wish, and this is not in mercie, but in wrath. They may receive mercies, but not as mercies, not in mercie. And there are four demonstrations when God hears a man in wrath.

1 When he asks any thing of that is sinfull in its own nature; as the deniall of it is an act of mercy, so the grant of it is a fruit of Gods anger. God doth many times give those things in his anger,

cap. 2. v. 11.
rov.

Reason 2.

Object. 1.

Ans. 1.

*Concedit iram,
quod negat pro-
pitius.*

anger, which he denies when he is well pleased. God will not hear his own people according to their wils, but according to his own will. It is in this case as it is with a father, when his child, for want of knowledge asks a knife of him, by which he may cut his fingers; the father will not give him the knife, except it be in wrath: So a man may ask mercies at the hand of God, and it may be God will give them in wrath to cut themselves with them.

2 If you ask those things of God, which though they are not sinfull in their own nature; yet if thy asking of these lawfull things, be to an unlawfull end, God will denie these in mercie; and when he gives them it is in wrath. As if thou desirest temporall mercies to abuse them to drunkenness, or to live in any other sin and wickedness; if God give thee those mercies, 'tis as a testimonie of his wrath to thee. So it was in the 78 Psalm, *ver. 18. They tempted God in their hearts, and asked meat for their lust. There was the end of their desires. They desired a lawfull thing for unlawfull ends; But what followed? The wrath of God: For while the meat was in their mouths, the wrath of God came upon them, Ver. 30, 31.*

3 If you ask any thing of God, and he gives it in wrath, you may know by this; if it be an occasion of sin to thee, it is given thee in wrath. So it was with the *Israelites*, even now mentioned, the meat that God gave them, proved an occasion of sin, *Ver. 32. They sinned still, and believed not his wondrous works.* When the mercies you enjoy, become fuell to your lusts, those mercies are accompanied with the curse and wrath of God; and this using of mercies, will turn to the aggravation of wrath.

4 Mercies are given thee in wrath, when the enjoiment of them hinders thee from the receipt of greater mercies from God. Thus it was with the Devils, *Mat. 8. 31, 32.* They besought Christ that they might go into the Herd of Swine: Christ granted them that; he let them enter into Swine, that they might not enter into men. When the giving of temporall mercies, hinders thee from the receipt of spirituall mercies, they are given in wrath. There are many men to whom God gives temporall mercies, they have riches in abundance, pleasure at will, every thing they can desire; but these mercies take off their thoughts and affections from bet-

ter things; by getting these they lose Christ, and grace, immortality, and eternall happiness. Now in these cases, though God doth give mercies, yet they are given in wrath; and so notwithstanding this Objection, the priviledge of Gods people, is much greater then the priviledge of wicked men.

But it may be further objected and enquired; If this be so, that mercies are given to wicked men in wrath, and by a common providence, *How may I know when mercies come to me as returns of prayers?*

Now I shall answer that in these particulars.

1 Mercies are returns of prayer, when the receiving of mercie is a means to quicken the heart to beg for other mercies at the hands of God: when the mercie shall make thee more to love prayer, more to use prayer. This you finde proved by *Dauids* experience, *Psal. 116. 2. Because he hath heard my voice, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* You see here, because God had heard *Dauids* prayer, and gave him the mercie he begg'd, he makes it an argument and an engagement to himself to pray as long as he lived. So that to continue prayer, is a means to get more mercie; and the leaving off of prayer when you have a mercy, is a means to lose that which you have obtained at the hands of God. But as for the wicked, it is not so with them. Mercies received onely from a common, or generall providence, have no such efficacy, as you may see, *Job 21. 7, 8, &c.* there *Job* tels you, — *the wicked live, become old, yea, mighty in power: Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their Bull gendereth, and faileth not, their Cow calveth, and casteth not her Calf.* And so he goes on, describing that happy condition that wicked men were in, and how God followed them with mercy after mercy. Well, what was the effect of this? Did this engage them to call upon God? Did this make them in love with prayer? No, it had a quite contrary effect, *Verse 14. Therefore they said unto God, Depart from us; for we desire not the knowledge of thy waies.* And, *Verse 15. What is the Almighty, that we should serve him? And what profit should we have, if we pray unto him?*

2 Mercies that are given as returns of prayer, doe not onely
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Quest.

When mercies are returns of prayer.

Ans. 1.

make a man consider that they are from God, but draw the heart to God, and put a man upon employing them in the service, and to the honour of God. This we find to be the temper of *Hannah*, 1 *Sam.* 1. 27, 28. *Hannah* had prayed for a child, God gave her a son. Now what doth shee with this mercie? Observe, *For this child I praised, and the Lord hath granted my petition, — Therefore have I lent him to the Lord as long as he liveth.* Seeing God hath heard my praier, and granted my request, therefore I will give this mercie to God, to be employed in this service. So 1 *John* 3. 22. *And whatsoever we aske, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.* You see it is made an evidence, that what we receive is received as an answer to our askings; because we make those mercies helps to obedience to keep Gods commandments. But now mercies that come from a common providence, doe not draw out the heart towards God; they rather draw them out towards sin; as it was in the fore mentioned *Israelites*, *Psal.* 78. though God did give them their hearts desire, yet were they not estranged from their lust.

3 Mercies come from God as returns of praier, when they make you more to rejoyce in the God that hears your praiers, and gives you the mercie, then in the mercy you receive from God. Thus you find it was in *Hannah*, she asked a son, and God gave her a son, yet she saith, 1 *Sam.* 2. 1. *My heart rejoiceth in the Lord.* God gave her a son, she rejoiced in that mercie, but she rejoiced more in God that gave it. So it was with *David*, *Psal.* 85. 6. *Will thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoyce in thee?* We will not rejoyce chiefly in the mercie, but in thee. But on the contrary, those that receive mercies out of the basket of common providence, they rejoyce more in the mercie then in the God of mercy; they rejoyce in their wealth, and glory, in the multitude of their riches; but as for God they bid him depart from them; they cannot rejoyce in God.

The seventh Sermon.

LUKE 11. 8.

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will give unto him as many as he needeth.



Mercies that are the fruits of praier, are known by this, He that hath them, ascribes them not to his own industry, but to the grace & mercy of God. Thus it was with *Sampson*, *Jud. 15.* when he was ready to die for thirst, he praied unto the Lord, and God clave an hollow place in the jaw-bone, and gave him water. Now *Sampson* calls the name of the place *Enhakkore*, *2be well of him that praied*: he ascribes it to the return of his praiers; to that assistance that God gave him to pray. So *Hannab* ascribed her mercy to God, not to her selfe. But now a wicked man that receives mercies from Gods general providence, his language is, This I have labored for; this I have ventured my life for; this my friends left me; this I got by my forecast, providence and industrie: thus they sacrifice to their own nets, but seldom say, this is the return of praiers, this is the gift of God.

5 That mercie that is given as a return of praier, is enjoied with more inward quiet, and contentment of mind, then when it is given in by generall providence. When *Eli* told *Hannab* that she should have a son, and that her praier was heard, she had so much inward joy and contentment of mind, that it is said, *Hannab went away rejoicing; and her countenance was no more sad*: The consideration of that made her very much to rejoyce. The reason is, because mercies that are given in as returns of praier, they are given in with a blessing, & inward quietness and contentment of minde. The mercies that God gives his own people, he gives them with joy and comfort, *Prov. 10. 22 The blessing of the Lord maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow to it.* You read, *1 Chron. 4.*

10. And *Jabez* called on the God of *Israel*, saying, O that thou wouldest blesse me indeed, and enlarge my Coasts, and that thy hand might be with me, and that thou wouldest keep me from evill, that it may not grieve me. *Jabez* knew that it was the manner of God, when he gave blessings as returns of praier, not to add grief to it. *Isaac* he praied for his wife, and God gave her to him, to be a great comfort to him. It may be wicked men have wives, and no content with them, but sorrow added to them, because they did not pray for them, as *Isaac* did; they have children, but sorrow with them; and abundance of riches, and sorrow added to that; and all because they have not the mercies as returns of praier. The mercies that are given in a way of generall providence, usually are accompanied with vexatiousness and discontent, snares and sorrows mingled with the mercies. So it was, *Psal.* 106. 15. *He gave them their requests but he sent leanness into their souls.* God gives wicked men indeed their requests, but how is it, with a blessing, and with content? No, no such matter, they have a curse with it. You know *Saul* gave *Michal* to *David*, to be a snare to him, a cross and discontentment: So doth God many times, in just judgement, give his blessings to wicked men, to be snares and curses, and crosses to them.

6 Mercies that come as returns of praier, may be known by this, if they are given in the time when God doth draw out thine heart to seek him in holy duties. An instance of this you have *Acts* 12. While the Church was met to pray for *Peters* enlargement, the prison doors were opened; and he came and knocked at the door of the house, where they were assembled. This was an evident sign that God gave in *Peter* to them as a return of praier. So *Acts* 4. 31. *When they had praied, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* You read, *John* 4. 52, 53. That the Noble man enquired diligently concerning the time wherein the child began to recover; and when he understood that, he knew it was a return of his praier, and a fruit of Christs love. God tels his people, *Isa* 65. 24. *Before they call I will answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.* Thus we read in the book of Martyrs, That the people of God did make it a sign of Gods answering their praiers, when God was pleased to give in his mercies to them at the time wherein they praied. Thus we read of *Luther*, That there was a young man that had made a Covenant, and sealed

led a Bond with his own blood, to give himselfe soul and body to the Devill; only to live in pleasure, and to do and have whatsoever he did desire. And when the time of the Bond was almost out, he being much troubled in his mind, came to *Luther*, and told him what he had done, and what was like to befall him upon it. Whereupon *Luther* called the Church together, and kept a solemn Fast in the behalf of the young man: And whilst that *Luther* was in praier, being earnest with God, there was a great noise heard amongst them; and the Bond was cast into the lap of *Luther*, in the midst of the congregation. And so for the time to come, the young man did lead a holy and godly life.

7 And lastly, Mercies are given as answers of prayers, in case you make care and conscience to perform to God, those vowes which you made to God, before you did enjoy the mercy. But when we promise God largely before we have the mercy, and when we have them, do not perform our vowes, it is an argument we have the mercies by generall and common providence: *Job 22. 27, 28. Thou shalt make thy praier unto him, and he shall hear thee; and thou shalt pay thy vowes; thou shalt also desires a thing, and it shall be established unto thee, and the light shall shine upon thy waies.* When thou beggest a mercy, and saist, Lord, give me such a mercy, and I will do thus and thus; I will walk so and so before thee, I will improve them to thy glory. Now, when thou shalt thus ask for mercie, and make vowes to God, he will hear; but then thou must be sure to perform thy vowes. This frame of heart we find to be in *David*, *Psal. 66. 13, 14. I will go into thine house with burnt offerings, I will pay thee my vowes which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken when I was in trouble.* You see *David* was in trouble, and he praied to God, and made some promises and vowes, in case God would deliver him. Now God did deliver him out of trouble, and he did make good his vowes. Now here was a return of praier. *David* you see did not grow secure and carelesse, but he made conscience to pay what he had promised to God. And so you see how you may discover whether the mercies you receive from God, be returns of praier, or only fruits of common and generall providence. And so much for answer to that Question.

Another Objection, or case of conscience, is this; *How canst thou be true, that God gives his people more then they need, seeing it is*

Object. 1.

the complaint of Gods people many times, that they have been a long time begging mercy, and God doth not give them so much as they desire. Many say, I pray for pardon of sin, and I cannot get it pardoned, and the pardon sealed. I pray daily for power against my corruptions, and yet I cannot get my lusts subdued? What then shall I think of my prayers, may some poor soul say.

Ans. 1.

Now to this I shall lay down several things, by way of answer.
 1 It must be considered, that God many times gets glory by the denials of his people; yea, he gets more glory by denying, then by the granting of a mercy. And if the denying of a mercy to thee, be the way to advance Gods glory, it is better that God should have his glory, and thou be without the mercie, then that thou shouldst have the mercy, and God want his glory. An eminent instance of this you have, *John 11.* There was a praier made by *Mary and Martha*, for their brother *Lazarus*; And they came unto Jesus, and said, *He whom thou lovest is sick*: But Jesus said, *Thy sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God.* When Jesus Christ heard that he was sick, yet he staid two daies in the place where he was; though he loved *Martha*, and he loved *Lazarus*, yet he staid two daies and would not go to him; but in the 14 verse, Christ said plainly, *Lazarus is dead: And I am glad for your sakes, that I was not there, to the intent that you might believe.* But they said unto him, *Lord, if thou hadst been here, he had not died.* Christ came and commanded them to roll the stone away, *Martha* answered, *He hath been four daies in the grave, and by this time he stinketh.* This was that that Christ aimed at: Christ knew that it was greater glory to him, to raise the dead out of the grave, then to raise him out of the bed of sickness: The power of his Godhead did more appear in the former, then in the latter. And when *Martha* told him *he stinketh*, Jesus answered, *Said I not unto thee, If thou didst believe, thou shouldst see the glory of God?* that is, thou shouldst see the power of my Godhead: This was the end of Christs denying of mercie, though it was earnestly desired.

2 I answer, It may be thou dost not hear God in his commands, and then it is no wonder God doth not hear thee in thy prayers. If thou dost not hearken to the call of God, it may be expected that God should not hearken to thy call. See *Prov. 1. 24.*

Because

Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded. Compared with Verse 28. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. Mic. 3. 4. Then they shall cry unto the Lord, but he will not hear them: he will even hide his face from them at that time, as they have behaved themselves ill in their doings, Zach. 7. 13. Therefore it is come to passe, that as he cried; and they would not hear; so they cried, and I would not hear saith the Lord of Hosts. It may be God hath been calling upon thee these many years to believe, and to repent; to be reformed, to forsake the evill of your doings; and thou hast not heard his calling; his mercies have not drawn thee; his judgements have not affrighted thee: and is it not just with God to let thee call, and be not hear thee?

3 It may be thou dost ask but sleightlie, & therefore thy prayers are not successfull: As it is with a man that asketh any thing of another man, sleightlie and coldlie, he doth, as it were, desire him to say him nay: So when a man askes mercies of God carelesslie and indifferently, this provokes God to give no answer. It may be thou praieest sleepily and drowzilie, and with a wandering heart: and dost thou think God will hear that prayer, that thou dost not hear thy self? Dost thou think that God will accept of that prayer, when thou knowest not what thou saiest?

4 God may give thee a mercie, and thou through thy incredulity, impatience, and inobservancie, not mind the returns that God gives. God may hear thy prayers, and yet thou not take any notice of it. This you may see in *Job, Job 9. 16, 17. If I have called and God answered, yet I will not believe that God hath heard me, because thou breakest me with thy tempest. Job* was in a fit of impatience and unbelieve. And though God did give him returns of prayer, yet he would not, did not observe them.

5 God may denie thee the mercie, not that he is unable, or unwilling to hear thee or relieve thee; but to make thee the more desirous of, and so the more fit for mercie. It may be yet thou art not fit for an answer. The Philosopher begged some monie of *Antigonus*, he gave him a *Drachme*: He said; It is not for a King to give so little, a Talent had been a more suitable gift. The King replied, Though a Talent is fit for me to give, yet thou art not fit to receive: So though God is alwaies fit and readie to give an answer

answer to our prayers, yet we are not alwaies fit and ready to receive it. God bids us open our mouths wide, and I will fill it. God denies us, that we may open our mouths the wider, and enlarge our desires the more after mercy. The Lord doth by his people, as a father by his child; a father may seem to withdraw and hide himselfe from his child, to try its love to him; and the child begins to mourn and cry, yet the father comes not to the child; but when he hears the child crie aloud, then he comes to it, and takes it up in his arms: So the Lord many times sees his people pray, but he seems to withdraw from them, to hide himselfe from the prayers of his people; and goes as it were out of their sight, untill they begin to cry aloud, to be very earnest and importunate in their prayers, till their desires be enlarged towards God; and then graciously returns their prayers into their bosom. Now this is a very good reason, why God denies the prayers of his people. Desires deferr'd, grow the stronger; but if the mercies be soon given, the desires grow cold, and the mercie growes contemptible. Mannah lightly come, is lightly set by. God doth by us as a Fisher-man doth, he drawes back the bait, that so the Fish may come after it the more eagerly, and bite the harder. God seems to draw back a mercy, that we may more earnestly pursue it.

6 Consider this that Gods people have prayed and waited a long time before God hath given them the mercy they have asked, before God hath given them an answer of their prayers. God promised *Abraham* a son, that from him should proceed such an one, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed, that his seed should be multiplied as the stars in the firmament; and yet it was fifteen years between the time of Gods making him that promise, and the accomplishment of it. So likewise you find it in *Zachariah* and *Elizabeth*, they prayed for a child at the first beginning of their marriage, now God did hear their cries and prayers; yet he did not give them a return, till they were old and stricken in yeares. So likewise it was with the Church, *Lam. 3. ver. 8.* Also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer. And *ver. 44.* Thou hast covered thy self with a cloud, that our prayers should not passe through. So also it was, *Hab. 1. 2.* O Lord, how long shall I cry, and thou wilt not heare; It was also the complaint

*Desideria dilata
sacrescunt, at
cuius data viles-
cunt.*

plaint of holy David, *Psal. 22. 1, 2. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me; why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day time, and thou hearest not, and in the night season, and am not silent.*

7 God may not only defer or denie to hear his peoples prayers, but in some times and cases be angry with the prayers of his people. *Psal. 80. 4. O Lord God of Hosts, how long wilt thou be angry against the prayers of thy people? So Job 40. 20, 21. I cry unto thee, and thou dost not hear me: I stand up, and thou regardest me not; thou art become cruell to me with thy strong hand, thou opposest thy selfe against me.*

8. Consider this for thy comfort, that thy person may be accepted and thy prayers heard, and yet the thing thou praieest for, not granted to thee. An instance of this you have in Christ himselfe, he praied, *Father, if it be possible let this cup passe from me, Mat. 26.* yet this cup did not pass from him, but he did drink of it, and yet it is said that Christ was heard in all that he praied for, *Heb. 5. 7. Dent. 3. ver. 23. I besought the Lord at that time (saith Moses) and ver. 26. But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me: and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee, speak no more to me of this matter.* Moses did importunately desire that he might see the Land, and go over Jordan to possesse it. *Moses* was a godly man, and here he praies for this mercy, but yet God was angry with him, and bade him pray no more. God bade him go up into the mount and see the Land, but told him he should not go over. So when men aske a particular mercy at the hand of God, God may denie them that mercy, and yet heare their prayers and accept their persons.

9 God may deny thee thy mercy thou askest, and give thee a better in the room of it; he makes you to open your mouthes the wider, that he may give you the greater mercies. *Abraham* praied that *Ismael* might live. Now God did not heare his prayer in that, as *Abraham* did desire it, but he gave him *Isaac*, and with him he established the Covenant, which was a better mercy. *Moses* was denied in his request, to go into *Canaan*, but he was translated into a better place, into the true *Canaan*, the Kingdome of Heaven.

10 God may denie what we pray for in mercy, which should

he grant it would be a token of his wrath ; as if a man should ask that which was sinfull, or that which would be an unavoidable occasion of sin, or if he should ask it for sinfull ends; or in case a man ask that that would be a monument of his shame; all which Cases I have spoken to before, and therefore shall now say no more.

1st God may hear another mans praiers for thee, though he will not hear thine own. This is a great comfort to every poor weak Christian in the world, they have a stock of praiers going for them to the throne of grace. You read in *Job* 42. that God forbade his three friends to pray, but bade *Job* pray for them, and told him, that he would hear him for them, *Ver. 8, 9. Go to my servant Job, and offer up for your selves a burnt offering, and my servant Job shall pray for you; for him will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly, in that you have not spoken of me the thing that is right, like my servant Job.* And they did as God commanded them, and the Lord accepted *Job*. It may be there be times when you cannot pray, or when God will not hear your praiers, but remember you have a stock of praiers going for you. And thus much shall suffice by way of answer to this Objection: I now come to make application.

The eighth Sermon.

LUXE II. 8.

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will give unto him as many as he needeth.

Corollary I.



IN the first place; let me draw some Inferences or Corollaries from what hath been insisted upon.

1 Returns to praier are not given for the works sake, but for the persons sake. Though the matter of thy praier may be good, yet if thou art not a good man thou shalt not be accepted. God had respect first to *Abel*, and

and then to his offering. *Psal. 34. 17. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth. The person must be in a state of favour, before the duty can be accepted.*

2 Though prayers are not returned for the work, yet they are not returned without the work. God expects the work, and the work you must do, though God will not have you to look for acceptance for the works sake.

Corol. 2.

3 Nor are returns of prayer made to a person singly considered, but to a member of Christ, as one that hath a share in his Intercession, *Joh. 15. 7. If ye abide in me, — ye shall ask what you will, and it shall be given you. So Joh. 16. 23. Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my Name, that he will give to you.* All our prayers are but cyphers, till Christs intercession be added. Cyphers in Arithmetick stand for nothing till a figure be added.

Corol. 3.

4 The longer and the more thou hast prayed, the more affectionate shouldst thou be in prayer. *Mat. 6. 7. Ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.* Observe the gradation in these words; Ask, but you must not stay there, you must seek; nor yet must you rest satisfied there, you must knock. Your affections should be every day more eager and earnest, you should pray more fervently; as it is said of Christ, *Luke 22. 44.*

Corol. 4.

5 He can never pray importunately, that doth not pray daily; intermission of duty will quickly cause an interruption in thine affections; you must therefore pray in secret, pray fervently, pray morning and evening. And to stir you up to, and encourage you in this work,

*Luke 22. 44.
κατακλινησθαι
προσηυχασθαι.
Corol. 5.*

Consider, 1 The example of those holy men of God, who have done thus. *Nehemiah 1. 6. Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eye open, that thou maiest hear the prayer of thy servants which I pray before thee day and night.* So you have the example of *Daniel, Dan. 6. 10. — He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.* It was a custome that he had observed of former time. Though hee was a great Courtier, and a man full of great employment, yet he would not neglect prayer; Nor was this an extraordinary fit, but his ordinary course. So in *David, Psal. 5. 3. My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, and in the evening will*

I direct my prayer unto thee, and will looke up. So, Psal. 88. 13. But unto thee have I cried, O Lord, and in the morning shall my prayer prevent thee. So Psal. 119. 147. I prevented the dawning of the morning, and cried unto the Lord Psal. 55. 17. Evening and morning and at noon will I pray and cry aloud.

3 You have the example of Jesus Christ, *Mark 1. 35.* In the morning rising up a great while before day, hee went out and departed into a solitary place, and there praied; and so at evening, *Mat. 14. 23.* *He went up into a mountain to pray, and when the evening was come, he was there alone.* And lest you should think this was only upon an extraordinary occasion, it is said, *Luke 3.* *He came to the Mount of Olives, as he was wont.* *John 18. 2.* *Jesus resorted thither with his Disciples.*

3 Consider, you have the very examples of Heathens in this. The Heathens sacrific'd to *Hercules* morning and evening upon the great Altar at *Rome*.

4 Consider, that in the Lords Praier we are taught to pray every day. Christ did not bid us pray for bread or things necessary for a moneth, or a yeare, but day by day.

5 This was prefigured in the Law, there was a daily offering to be given to God, a Lamb at morning, and a Lamb at night, as you may see, *Exod. 29. 38, 39.* Yea, extraordinary sacrifices did not abolish this number; there was a burnt offering for the Sabbath, besides the continuall burnt offering, and the burnt offering at the beginning of the moneth, and the Pasover, and yet though these extraordinary works were to be done, yet the ordinary were not to be left undone. So that you see here is good ground and encouragement for men to be frequent in these religious duties.

And so much for the first Use.

Use 2.
Caution.

2 This may be usefull for the instruction of those to whom God hath given returns of praiers, to whom God hath out of his bounty given more then they did ask. To such I must give, First, some negative cautions. Secondly, some positive cautions.

Negative 1.

1 Some negative cautions, and that in four regards.

1 Let not Gods returns to thy praiers, make thee remiss and careless in the performance of duty. Beware of an empty heart when

when God brings in thy mercies with a full hand. Merchant-Adventurers, if they have good returns, are encouraged to adventure their ships to sea again: Our hearts are so base and diligent, that we are apt, when we have what we seek for, to seek no more. O take heed of this, let not Gods goodness make you worse.

2 Another caution is this. Let not returns to prayer make you conceited and proud of your gifts, or of your graces. We are too apt to reflect upon our selves, our parts, our graces, our abilities, and therefore we have more need to take heed of it. Beware that thine heart be not lifted up in pride against God, lest God be provoked to lift up his hand against thee in judgement.

3 Take heed that you do not ascribe the returns of prayer to your own importunities, but meely to the freeness of Gods grace. Men are very apt to sacrifice to their own nets, and burn incense to their own drags. Take heed of this, God cannot endure to have his glory given to another. Say rather, I have received a mercie, but (alas) there is nothing in me that could deserve it, all comes solely from the free grace of God.

4 Take heed of returning again to sin, after God hath returned thy prayers into thy bosome, *Psal 85.8. I will hear what the Lord will speake, for he will speake peace to his people, but let them not turn again to folly.* It would be both sin and folly in thee, to return to sin after God hath given thee an answer of peace. This was Davids resolution for his own particular, *Psal 6.8. Depart from mee all ye workers of iniquity: Why, what's the reason? The Lord hath heard the voice of my supplication.* As if David had said, O ye wicked men, you have been occasions of sin to me, and companions in sin with me, but now that God hath been thus gracious to mee, now that God hath graciously returned my prayers, I will have no more to do with you: *Depart from me ye workers of iniquity.* And so much for the negative Cautions.

I shall now lay down a few positive Cautions.

1 If God hath returned thy prayers, see that thou beest more frequent in prayer then thou wast formerly. This was the purpose of holy David, *Psa 116. Because the Lord hath heard my prayer, therefore I will call upon him as long as I live.* So let it be

Cautions positive,

your care, to set your selves more solemnly, and seriously to seek God, then ever you have done.

2 See that you are more in praises to God, then you have been. Those mercies that thou hast won by prayer, are to be worn by thankfulness, *Psal. 45. 10 All thy works praise thee, O Lord, and thy Saints do bless thee.* All Gods works doe praise him; *The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy works.* That is, they are all the passive monuments of Gods power in creating them; But the Saints they are agents in praising God. Blessing is more then praising: A picture praiseth him that made it; but it doth not bless him; The Saints, they bless God in a peculiar manner; their mouths are full of the praises of God: They have a principle within them of praising God; they are agents in setting forth his praise. And therefore it is very fit that you should bless God.

3 See that you be much in obedience: If God doth much for thee, see that thou do much for God. If God hath an hearing ear, thou must have a doing hand. And so much for the Use of Caution.

3 I shall speak something by way of comfort.

Use 3.
Comfort.

1 To such as have not this importunity, nor this returne of prayers.

2 To such as have returns to prayer.

1 Here is a word of consolation to those that want this holy importunity, and that in three respects:

1 Thou maist pray with sincerity, when thou dost not pray with importunity. *The Lord saith David, is nigh to all that call upon him,* but how? but only to them that call on him importunately and powerfully, but *to all that call upon him in truth;* if thou canst say thou call'st upon God in truth, and with a sincere heart, God will be nigh unto thee.

2 It is the office of Christ to pray for thee in Heaven, when thou dost not pray upon earth. It is the work of Jesus Christ to make intercession for thee to his Father. Although thou hast not importunity in thy selfe, yet consider, O beleeving soul, that Christ is in Heaven, importuning the father for thee.

3 A sense and complaining of the want of this holy importunity, is accounted by God a decree of it. If you did never complain

plain of the want of the spirit, it was a signe you never had the Spirit : and now that you bewail the want of it, it is a sign you have it.

2 Here is also a word of consolation, to those that have returns of praier; and that in four respects :

2 Branch.

1 Thy mercies are double mercies : It is a mercie to have mercy, but to have it in such a way, is a double mercie, *Psal. 91. They shall call upon me, and I will answer them; and I will be with him in trouble, &c.* It is a mercy to have deliverance out of trouble; but to have it through praier, a deliverance that comes in by praier, is a double mercy.

2 These mercies are sanctified mercies. Mercies as you are creatures, are good, but as returns of praier, they are sanctified: And blest mercies are much better to the soule that enioieth them.

3 The mercies which thou hast, as returns of praier, are costly mercies. Mercies that come in by providence, are easie and cheap, but mercies that come in by praier, are costly; they cost the price of Christs blood to purchase them, and they cost thee many a praier and tear to obtain them.

4 These mercies are sealing mercies, and that in three particulars :

1 They are seals to you, that you have the Spirit of God; for Christ hears no praiers, and no spirit, but his own. God is as well pleased with the barking of a Dog, as with the praiers of a Christless man.

2 It is a seale to thee of an interest in Christs intercession. If thy praiers are returned, it is a sign they are accepted. Now no praiers are accepted, but by vertue of the intercession of Jesus Christ.

3 These returns are a seal of more mercies; a sign that thou shalt have more mercies from God. One mercie that is given in by praier, is a pledge of another mercie; and thy mercie in this life, is a pledge to thee, that thou shalt have eternall happineffe in Heaven to all eternity.

The

The first Sermon.

I THESSALONIANS 5. 9.

For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

THis Text containes in it the immutable decree and unchangeable counsell of God, touching mankind; though all men are made by the same hand, yet they are not all appointed to attain the same end, by that God that made them; some are made to be vessels of honour, and others to be vessels of wrath: some are appointed to be vessels of honour, meet for the Lord Jesus Christs use, and others to be vessels of wrath, fitted for destruction, Rom. 9. 22, 23. Some, as in my Text, are appointed unto wrath, and others to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ; so that all Mankind are comprehended under these two ranks, there are but sheep and goats; right hand men, and men of the left hand; there are but some men elected, and others reprobated; some appointed unto wrath, and others to obtain salvation.

And if there be but these two waies for all flesh, then it be-
hoveth us to consider what the counsels of God concerning us
may be, whether we are appointed unto wrath, or to obtain sal-
vation?

I shall keep you no longer in the preamble of the Text, some
are appointed unto wrath. Wrath here is an emphaticall word,
and comprehends in it all the torments of the damned; and if
you ask mee why the torments of the damned are here called
wrath, the reason is, because it is the wrath of God that makes hel
to be hell; Hell, if the favour of God could be there, would not
be hell; and heaven, could Gods wrath be there, would not
be Heaven: The loss of Gods favour is the greatest punishment
that a man can undergo; the torments of hell are called wrath,
to intimate to us, that the greatest torture the creature can un-
dergo,

dergo, is the lying under the wrath of God; the want of the favour of God shall be the compleat torture of the damned; all the torments of the wicked, are called by this general expression, the wrath to come.

Beloved, the words are not difficult, I shall discourse and handle them under a double consideration. First, under a relative; and secondly, under an absolute consideration.

First, under a relative consideration; For God hath not appointed us unto wrath; for this word (*for*) carries a reference to some thing that goes before in the preceding verse; but let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breast-plate of Faith and Love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation; *for God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation*: As if the Apostle should say, You are not to argue on this manner, that if God hath decreed me to be saved, I may live as I list, I shall be saved for all that; or if God hath decreed me to be damned, I shall be damned, do what I can to the contrary, because I cannot alter Gods decree. You must not argue thus, saith he, *but let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breast-plate of Faith and Love, &c. for we are not appointed unto wrath*. Gods decrees should not be an encouragement to you, to live as you list, but a spur to provoke you to live in the daily exercise of grace; from whence I would note this Doctrine.

That the Doctrine of Gods election and reprobation, or appointing some men to glory in Heaven, and others to be vessels of wrath in Hell, is or ought to be a speciall inducement and spur, to provoke men to live in the exercise of grace.

This is that which is here laid down by the Apostle, and the use that I shall make of it, shall be to condemn those indirect inferences, that carnall hearts draw from this Doctrine of Predestination; then the *Pelagians*, they argue from the decrees of God: say they, if God have decreed some to be saved, and others to be damned, we may then live as we list; for let us do what we can, we cannot possibly alter Gods Decrees: And again, others they reason thus, If God hath decreed some to Heaven, and others to hell, and the Decrees of God are unalterable, why, then let no man fast or pray, or perform any holy duties; for if he shall be saved, he shall be saved, or if he shall be damned,

1 Thes. 1. 10.

Doct.

ned, he shall be damned. *Faustine & begiensis*, one of the *Sampersdian* Sect said, *Nemo vigilans, nemo ieiunans, libidini contrarius, &c.* Thus they suck poison out of this sweet Doctrine of Gods Decrees, whereas these should be a motive and incentive to duty; for in the same decree, wherein God intends the final estate of any man, he does as well intend the means towards that end, as the end it self; if God intends to save such a man, in the same decree, he likewise intends that that man shall have grace, and use those means, and perform those duties, that are required in a person that shall be saved. The elect of God are predestinated by God, to be conformed to the Image of his Son, Rom. 8. 29. God had before ordained that we should walk in good works, Eph. 2. 10.

And as God hath decreed such a number of men shall be damned, so he hath likewise decreed to suffer those men to walk on after the vain imaginations of their own hearts, and to do that which is right in their own eyes, that so their deserved end may be destruction.

It is a piece of folly from the appointment of the end, to infer the refusal or neglect of the means.

I know there is not any of you but would count this a very absurd and irrationall consequence, should a man argue thus: God hath in his decree unalterably set down how long I shall live; my daies are numbred, so long I shall live, and no longer, and therefore I will use no means to prolong my life, or recover my health; I will neither eat nor drink, nor use physick, &c. This were a confessed absurdity and madness; for as God hath decreed how long you shall live, so he hath likewise decreed that you shall use the means that he hath appointed to prolong your life.

As it was in the great tempestuous storm that *Paul* and the rest of the men of the ship were in sailing to *Rome*, *Acts* 27. 24. The Angel of God told *Paul* that there should be no loss of any mans life, but of the ship only; yet in the 31. Verse *Paul* tells them, That unless they did all abide in the Ship, they could not be saved. God decrees the means to be used as well as the end. So *Hezekiah* in *2 Kings* 20. 6. when upon his praier the Lord added fifteen years unto his daies; now mark, had it been reasonable in him to conclude thus? The Lord hath promised that I shall live so many years longer, and therefore I will neither eat nor drink,

nor sleep, and the like, to prolong my life; no certainly, for as God did decree he should live fifteen years longer, so he did decree he should use the means to recover his health, and prolong his life, in the seventh verse.

But I shall stand no longer upon this particular, but come now to handle the words in an absolute consideration, *we are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.* In these words there is something implied. We are not appointed unto wrath, which implies that there are a certain number of people appointed by God unto wrath; and here is something expressed, namely, that there are a certain number of people that are not appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation; And thirdly, here is exprest, that Jesus Christ is the means appointed by God the Father, in and through whom men should obtain salvation.

These are the three particular heads I shall insist upon; I shall begin this morning with what is implied, and come in the afternoon to that which is exprest. First, from what is here implied, observe this Doctrine.

That there are a certain number of men appointed by God, to be objects of his eternall wrath. Beloved, this is a dreadfull point that I am now to handle, and therefore I shall spend but one hour upon it. I know there are a generation of men, that utterly deny any such purpose in God, that any of his creatures should be cast away, say they, it were cruelly in God to decree any of his people to be objects of his wrath: but I shall clearly evince it.

I will first prove this Doctrine, that it is so, which appears by those many expressions to this purpose, as that in *Rom. 9. 22.* saies the Apostle there, *Heathen are the Potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour; therefore what if God willing to shew his wrath, and make his power known, endured with much long suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction; that is, who can say any thing to God, or dare charge him with cruelty or in justice, if he does so? and so in the Epistle of Jude, v. 4. there is mention made of some, *ungodly men, that were of old ordained to this condemnation:* so in *Rom. 13. 5.* the Apostle saith, *there are but a remnant according to the election of grace; and the rest are hardened:* there are but some to ob-*

tein salvation, and others to be objects of Gods eternall wrath.

But the better to clear this truth to you, I shall spend some time in handling these two questions, as first,

Quest. 1.

Quest. How can I stand with Gods mercie, that he should in his eternall counsels, appoint any of his creatures to be objects of his wrath, when it is said, that he beheld all the works of his hands, and behold, they were all very good: now how can it consist with the mercy of God, to damn those creatures that he hath made, nay, to appoint them to be objects of his wrath before he made them.

Quest. 2.

Quest. 2. What black brands or Characters, the Scripture laies down of such persons who are to be objects of Gods wrath to all eternity?

Severall conclusions about the Doctrine of Gods Decrees premised.

But before I can proceed in handling these Questions, I must by the way premise these three or four Conclusions: as first,

1. That Gods decree, or appointing some men to be objects of his wrath, his decree (I say) does not infuse any sin or evill into such persons, but only withhold his grace from them. Look in *Deut. 29. 4.* it is said, *The Lord hath not given thee eyes to see, and ears to heare.* God did not put out their eyes, nor take away their ears. So *Psal. 81. 12.* *So I gave them up unto their owne hearts lust.* God did not put lust into them, but he withheld his grace from them, which would have subdued their lust.

2. The decree of non-election, is to be distinguished from the decree of destination to punishment: this latter is usually called by Divines, predamnation. The first is an act of Gods sovereignty, the latter an act of his justice: the one considers man as a reasonable creature, and mutable, the other as fallen into sin.

3. That the most of mankind are appointed by God, to be objects of his wrath: this is a very sad truth. *Many are called, but few are chosen, Mat. 24. 14.* *There are but a remnant according to the election of grace, Rom 9. 5, 6, 7.* It is the observation of ore, that if the world were divided into 31. parts, of those there are but five parts that ever heard of Christ: and of those, how few are there, that in their lives do declare any benefit by Christ: the most of men lie under this fatal misery, appointed by God to everlasting damnation. The Church is but a little flock, a Garden, which is but a little spot of ground, in comparison of the fields of the earth.

4 Another

Brevewords
Enquiries,

20 4 Another Conclusion is this, That the ordaining of most men unto wrath, does no way impeach the mercy of God. Because God would shew more mercie, should hee save but one man in the world, then he would shew severity of justice, should hee condemn all the rest: and this brings me to the first question I promised to handle; which is this.

Quest. How can this be consistent with the mercy of God, to appoint any of his creatures unto wrath?

Quest.

Answer. It may very well stand with Gods mercy, to appoint his creatures to wrath.

Answer.

1 God hath an absolute sovereignty over all his creatures; to do with them as he pleaseth: may not I do with mine own what I list? and who can say unto me, What dost thou? *Rom. 9. 21.* Such a power as the Potter hath of the same lump of clay, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour, such a power hath God over all the Sons and Daughters of men; he hath an absolute sovereignty over all his creatures, to do with them what seems good in his own eyes, and who art thou O man, that resistest against God?

2 Take this for an answer, that there is a great deal of reason why God should destroy and damn all the creatures that he hath made; as first, because God when he made man at first, he made him holy and upright, and perfect, and able to do his will in all things. He was able both to do the will of God, and also to continue in that estate wherein God made him; and so to be everlastingly happy. It is true, had God infused any vicious qualities into man it were something; but Gods hand was free from any such thing. God at first made man upright, but he hath since sought out many inventions, *Ecc. 7. 29.* Adam was in a state of perfection, but onely under a possibility of falling if hee would; and God foreseeing that man would fall, there was great reason why every man should be damned; because every man did fall. So the Angels they were at first made perfect; yet mutable; and because they fell, the Lord condemned every one of them, and saved none; but he doth not deal so with us, he spared none of the fallen Angels, but he doth save some of us, and therefore he hath shewed greater mercy to you the sinful sons and daughters of Adam, then he did to the fallen Angels; because all the Angels

that fell were damned, but man fell too, and yet the Lord rescues a remnant, that are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtain salvation through Jesus Christ.

3 Take this for an answer, that the Lord shewes more mercy, in the saving and appointing of one man to life and salvation, then he would have done rigour of justice, if he had condemned all the men in the world. I shall make it appear to you thus, because God was not bound to save any, and therefore if he doth, it is an act of grace and mercy. Give me leave to illustrate it to you by this comparison: Suppose a company of malefactors were all condemned to die. Now if a Prince should come in amongst them, and chuse out one of them, he would shew more mercy in saving that one, then he would have done rigour if he had hanged them all, because every one of them had deserved it.

Thus it is with us: wee have all transgressed and violated Gods law, and thereby lie under the guilt of condemnation, and being all condemned persons, it is more mercy in God to save but one of us, then it would be rigour, if he should have saved none. And thus much shall serve in answer to the first question.

Quest. 2.

The next thing that I shall speak to, is to shew you what are those black brands that the Scripture laies down of such persons that are appointed by God to be objects of his eternall wrath?

(Beloved) we can judge no man for the present, we may say that a man that goes on in such a sinfull practice is not called, but we cannot say he is not elected: but if he continues living and dying in such a course of sin, this plainly shewes such a man to be an object of wrath.

1 That man that hath committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, is unquestionably appointed by God to damnation. This is unquestionable, because he shall neither be forgiven in this life, nor in the life to come, *Mat 12. 32*. There are a great many ingredients goes to the making up of this sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost; as, 1 A man must be a Professor of Religion. 2 He must have knowledge to his profession. 3 He must have some seeming holiness. 4 He must fall away from all this. And 5 Persecute it. And 6 He must do all this with malice, and against conscience. All these are ingredients to the sin against the Holy Ghost. And a man that hath gone thus far, the Lord hath no intention to save him.

Now

The black brands of a reprobate discovered.

The sin against the Holy Ghost described.

Now the other Characters I shall give you, are not so peremptory and undeniable as this; but yet they are probable symptoms or guesses the Word of God laies down, of such men as are appointed to wrath.

2 A person that you may give a shrewd guess of to be appointed unto wrath, is such a one, as doth continue all his life-time to spurn against and contemn the Ministry of Gods Word, *Acts 13. 48. As many as were ordained unto eternal life believed;* but others that were not, they rejected it, and put far from them the Word of God: thus *Amaziah* did in the *2 Chro. 25. 16.* when the Prophet reproved him for seeking after the gods of the Heathens for help, that could not deliver themselves: the King answered him, and said, *Art thou made of the Kings counsell, for heere, why shouldst thou be smitten: then the Prophet forbore and said, I know that God hath determined to destroy thee, because thou hast done this, and hast not hearkened unto my counsell.* A man may conjecture that God hath determined to destroy such a man, that lies under the Ministry of the Word, opposing and contemning of it all his life time.

Mark 2 of reprobation.

3 That man that is given over by God to a judicial hardness of heart, and to final impenitency: you may fear such a man to be appointed unto wrath, *Rom. 2. 5.* But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up to thy self, wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgements of God. So in *Rom. 11. 7. The Apostle speaks there of a remnant according to the election of Grace, but the rest were hardened;* when God shall give a man over to a judicial hardness of heart, when he shall in just judgement harden his heart, and give him over to final impenitency, it is a sign such a man is appointed unto wrath.

Mark 3.

4 In case God hath at your life-time withdrawn the efficacy of his own spirit from his Ordinances w^{ch} you have enjoied, when you shall perceive the same man that sits in the pew with you in Gods house, to grow better and better, by every Ordinance, and you grow worse and worse, he is made more holy, and you more profane; his heart is more humble, and yours more proud; his heart more soft and tender, and sensible of the least sin, and yours more hard and inflexible; his conscience more awakened and apprehensive of the danger of sin, and yours more stupified

Mark 4.

and

and benighted; he finds the word of God as marrow and sweetness to him, the joy and rejoicing of his heart, but you find no sweetness or relish in it at all.

You that have these sad symptoms upon you, are in a very sad condition; and therefore consider of it seriously, what will become of you another day: if thou goest on in this condition of barrenness and unfruitfulness under the means of grace, and God withdrawes the efficacy of his Spirit from his Ordinances thou livest under, this is a shrewd signe that thou art a man appointed unto wrath.

When God shall, as in *Isa. 6. 9, 10.* bid you *hear indeed, but understand not, and see indeed, but perceive not, and make your hearts fat, and your ears heavy, and shut your eyes, lest you see with your eyes, & hear with your ears, & understand with your hearts & convert and be healed;* this is a sad symptome of your reprobation.

5 When a man makes the grace and mercy of God to be a means to embolden him in the waies of sin and rebellion against God, when a man makes mercy a spur to impietie, and because God is so good, therefore he will be the more vent'rous to run on in sin, this is a sad sign of reprobation.

Shall we sin (saies the Apostle) *because grace doth abound?* God forbid; he speaks of it with detestation and abhorrencia, when men shall presume on the mercie of God, and because he is so good and gracious, therefore they will be the more wicked and sinfull, this is a sad thing. In the Epistle of *Jude, ver. 4.* The Apostle there speaks of some ungodly men, *that turn the grace of God into lasciviousness;* why, who are these, saies he? *they are such as were of old ordained unto condemnation;* the Apostle laies it down as a sign of men appointed unto wrath, that do turn the grace of God into wantonnesse, and sin because grace doth abound.

6 Such as fall away finally from the profession of Christianity, they are the persons that are appointed by God to destruction, such as fall finally from the profession of the Gospell, *Heb. 10. 38, 39.* *If any man draw backe, my soule shall have no pleasure in him: but we are not of them that draw backe unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soule;* If any man draw backe unto perdition, my soule shall have no pleasure in him, but he shall be an object of my eternall wrath: finall Apostasie is a brand that does cha-

Last symptom
of reprobation

characterize a man to be one appointed by God to be an object of his wrath.

Now therefore examine your selves, if any of you be written in this black bill, and live and die under any of these sad symptoms, you have cause to feare that you are men appointed unto wrath, and cannot possibly obtain salvation through Jesus Christ.

And thus I have done with the doctrinall part of this point, I might now in the Application fall upon those matters of dispute that are between the Papists, and our Divines, and between the the *Arminians* and Orthodox, touching this Doctrine; but these disputes are fitter for the Schools, then for the Pulpit, and better for a learned, then for a popular Auditory, and therefore I shall onely make a plain and practicall use of it, and so have done.

Use 1. Is it so then that there are a certain number of men appointed by God to be objects of his eternall wrath? Oh then! what cause have you and I to blesse God, and blesse Jesus Christ, *that hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation; that we are freed from wrath to come by Jesus Christ, as in 1 Thes. i. v. last?* Oh blesse and praise the name of thy God, that his thoughts towards thee from everlasting, have been of mercy and grace, and pardon and forgiveness, of peace and loving kindnesse; Oh blesse God, and blesse Jesus Christ, that hath appeased his Fathers wrath, which else like as a consuming fire, would have burnt up thy soul like stubble; and when thou couldst not have been able to stand before these everlasting burnings, that then Christ should come and be as it were a skreen between his Fathers wrath and thee: Oh blesse Jesus Christ, that he should enterpose himselfe, that through him thou mightst obtain salvation.

The second Use; If God hath appointed a certain number of people unto wrath, why then this may be matter of information, that the people of God may know that they are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtain salvation: this is clear in the Text, saies the Apostle, *We are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtain salvation*: this is a great comfort to you, that you may not onely have a conjecturall faith, but a sure and certaine faith, you have the witnesses of the Spirit, and the earnest of the Spi-

rit for it, you may have a full assurance that you are not appointed unto wrath.

By the revealed will of God you may know his secret will, that he has had thoughts of grace, and mercy, and pardon, and glory towards you from all eternitie; for how could the Apostle say here else so confidently, *We are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtain salvation?* So in 2 Cor. 13. 6, 7. saies the Apostle there, *I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates, though we are so accounted and esteemed of by the men of the world:* though we are reproates in your eies, yet we trust we are not so in the sight of God; so that Gods people may certainly know within themselves, that they are not reprobates, or which is equivalent to it, that they are elected, and shall certainly obtain salvation by Jesus Christ.

Use 3.

The third Use; I infer from hence, that Christians ought not rashly to conclude against themselves, that they are appointed to wrath, because they doe not discern that they are in a state of grace; though it is true, a man cannot be effectually called, but he must have grace, yet he may be elected, and yet be without grace for the present: for the elect of God do all of them for a season, continue in a state of unregeneracie, and therefore be as bad as you will be, or as bad as you can be, it's true, you may say for the present, I am not called, but thou canst not say, I am not elected.

Christians should not conclude, that because they do not sensibly feele themselves in a state of grace, that therefore they are not elected, but ordained unto wrath; 'tis true, that whomsoever God hath predestinated to eternall life, before that man dies, he will effectually call him, yet a man may remain a great while in the state of unregeneracy before he be called; and therefore take heed of these rash conclusions against your selves, from your present sinfulness, you can only gather non-vocation, but you cannot conclude non-election, for election was before all worlds, but vocation is done here in time.

Use 4.

The fourth Use; If this be so, that God hath appointed some men to wrath, why then, what comfort may this be to all you that are the elect of God, and are not of that number appointed unto wrath, but to obtain salvation? It may be thy condition is sad and miserable here in this life, but this may bear up thy heart, thou

thou art not appointed unto everlasting misery; though it may be God hath appointed thee to a prison here, yet this may comfort thee, he hath not appointed thee to an everlasting prison; it may be here thou art exposed to trouble and sorrow and griefe, yet this may chear up thy heart, that God hath not appointed thee to be an object of his eternall wrath and fury in the life to come.

The fifth Use; If there be a certain number of people appointed by God to bee objects of his everlasting wrath, why then all you that are vessels of mercy, the elect of God, that are not appointed to wrath, but to obtaine salvation; O let the high praises of God be in your mouthes continually; and the more to provoke you hereunto, consider these four particulars.

1 That though the greatest part of the men in the world are appointed unto wrath, yet that you should bee in the number of the fewest of men that are ordained unto life, this should provoke you to thankfulness, that when God doth pass by the most of men to be vessels of wrath, yet you should be in the number of that little flock that shall be saved by Christ.

2 To provoke you the more to thankfulness, consider that those who were by God appointed unto wrath, they are naturally as good as ever thou wert, yea, had no worse natures then thou and I have, they had bad natures, and so had we, we were naturally no better then they: Now that God should ordain thee to life, and another man to wrath, whose nature was as good as thine, O how should this make thee to blesse the name of the Lord?

3 Consider, that many men that have been better in their lives then thou hast been, have yet been appointed by God to wrath, and thou to mercy; go among the Heathens, and there you shall find a holy *Cato*, a chaste *Socrates*, a meek *Seneca*, a just *Aristides*, these men burn in hell, and yet thou an unholly and unchaste, and impatient, and unjust creature brought to Heaven. *Cato* was a man admired for his sanctity, in so much, as it was said of him, that if any man would avoid sin, hee should so walk, as if *Cato* looked upon him, and yet this man appointed to wrath, and thou saved; and so a chaste *Socrates* cast into everlasting burnings, when thou that art an unchaste and an impure man, art carried to Heaven, and so a just *Aristides*, of whom it is said, that the Sun

Use 3.

Severall motives to provoke the elect to thankfulness.

3 Motive to thankfulness.

in the firmament should sooner change his course, then hee do injustice, and yet he in Hell, and thou an unjust man, elected to life; and a meek *Seneca*, excluded from mercy, and thou a forward and passionate man, taken up into glory.

And so if you look into the book of God, you shall read of *Demas* that prized Religion, and of some that almost became Christians, and of *Felix* that trembled under an Ordinance, it may be more then ever thou hast done; and of *Herod* that heard the Word gladly, and many others, and yet these men rejected, and thou embraced; this should cause much thanksgiving and praise to redound unto God, that he should have such thoughts of mercy towards thee, and passe by others.

4 Consider, that those men that have been by God appointed unto wrath, and are now in Hell, suffering the vengeance of eternall fire, these men had as much strength to help themselves from their misery, as thou hast; no more strength to keep thee from hell, then they had that are now in hell, thou art not able of thy selfe to act any grace, or perform any duty, or resist any corruption, or withstand any temptation, or to do any thing towards the saving of thy soule, and yet notwithstanding thou hast no more worth, or strength, or excellency, then other men have, and yet that God should ordaine thee to life, and them to condemnation.

Use of lamentation.

6 But this Doctrine doth not onely afford us matter of thanksgiving and praises of God, but also matter of lamentation too; it should provoke your pity to consider that such goodly creatures as men and women are, should yet bee objects of Gods wrath, and tormented by him to all eternitie; it moves your pity sometimes to see a proper man going to bee executed, you are ready to say, What pity is it to see such a man as that should be destroyed; but how should this move your pity much more, to consider that such goodly creatures as men and women are, should yet be the objects of the wrath of God, to all eternitie? It is said of *Xerxes*, that when he went up to the top of an hill, and there saw an Army of ten hundred thousand men in the field, he fell a weeping, and being asked the reason, he answered, *hee wept to thinke what would become of all that brave Army within an hundred yeares:* could you stand upon a high hill, and there

there behold all the world, and people in it, you might well burst forth into tears of lamentation to consider, what will become of all these people, 100 years hence, the most of them will then be tormented and roaring in hell, and there must continue in endless misery to all eternity. And thus I have done with the first Doctrine from what is here implied.

The second Sermon.

1 THESSALONIANS 5. 9.

For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

WE come now to handle what is exprest in the Text, we are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtain salvation through Jesus Christ; here are three things exprest. 1 What a Christian is not appointed to, is not appointed to wrath; and then, 2 What he is appointed to, namely, to obtain salvation. And 3 Here is laid down the means by whom a Christian doth obtain salvation, and that is by Jesus Christ. We are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

I shall onely at present, speak to the two first particulars, what a Christian is not appointed to, and what he is appointed to; we are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtain salvation. From whence we may learn this observation,

That there are a certain number, who are appointed by God, not to wrath, but to obtain salvation. It is needless so to multiply places of Scripture for the prooffe of it, the Doctrine lying so clear in the words; in the prosecution of it, I shall do these three things.

1 Shew you what this salvation is, that a certain number of people are appointed to.

2 I shall examine whether this Doctrine of Predestination,

and of Gods appointing of a certain number of people to salvation, be a Doctrine that should make men loose and careless.

3 I shall shew you whether God in appointing some men unto salvation, hath respect to their foreseen faith or good works. For the first,

Quest.

1 What is meant here by salvation, that some men are appointed to?

Ans.

I answer, there are two things included in this term salvation. You must know in generall, that it is that happy and glorious estate which glorified persons in Heaven do and shall enjoy, and it includes in it these two things: there is in this estate something privative, and something positive.

A description,
what salvation
is.

1 There is something privative in it, you shall be freed from sin, and from the causes of sin, and from the punishments of sin; but but here you are not so, the best of Gods children are not here freed from sin, but it is a spot upon the most beautifull face, but then you shall appear as in *Eph. 5. 27. not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing*, but you shall be holy, and without blemish.

2 You shall be freed from the causes of sin likewise, which are two, either from within, a sinfull corrupted and polluted nature, or from without, the temptations and suggestions of Satan: then you shall be freed from the cause of sin within, a corrupted and polluted nature, which shall then be converted into a glorified and purified nature, a nature that shall not have the least provocation or inclination in it to vanity. And 2 You shall bee freed from the temptations of the Devil, he shall then be no more able to trouble or molest, or entice thee to sin.

3 You shall bee freed from the punishment of sin, whether outward, as troubles, afflictions, disgraces, persecutions and death; or inward, as horror and terror of conscience, and the like: when you come to heaven, you shall be freed from all these, but till you come there, none of these can be had, you shall neither be freed from sin, the causes nor punishments of it. In the *1 Kings 6. 32.* it is said there, that in the entrance into the holy of holies, upon the doors were carved Palm trees; now a Palm-tree is an emblem of Conquest and Victory, and these were placed there to note, that so long as we live in this world, we are souldiers to fight, but we are not Conquerours till wee enter

enter into the holy of holies, till we come to heaven. In the time of the Law, if any unclean thing fell into a vessell of earth, the vessell was unclean, till it was broken: So it is with us, there is uncleanness in our bodies, and wee shall not be clean, till our earthly Tabernacles be laid in the dust.

But 2 In this salvation, there is not onely something private, but also something positive; as first, we shall know God clearly, and see him as he is; we do here onely know God what he is not, and see him what he is not, we know he is not unjust, nor unrighteous, unwise or unmercifull, and the like; but we do not know what is that wisdom and holiness, and omniscience, and omnipotency, &c. that are in God; but in Heaven we shall know him as he is, we shall know God fully, and love God perfectly & unfeignedly, and serve him unweariedly, and praise him continually, and enjoy him everlastingly, and uninterruptedly. *Deum sine fine videbimus, sine fastidio amabimus, sine defatigatione laudabimus*, saith Bernard: it is true, the people of God have an enjoyment of God here in this life; but it is far different from that which they shall have in heaven, 1 It differs in *modo*, in the manner of enjoying: here they enjoy God mediately, and in and by his Ordinances; but then we shall enjoy him immediately without Ordinances; here wee see him but as in a glasse darkly, but then we shall behold him face to face. 2 In *mensura*, in the measure; here we enjoy God but in a small and weak measure; but there we shall enjoy him in a larger and full measure. 3 In *duratione*, in the continuance; here we enjoy him but for a time, now and then; but in heaven we shall enjoy him at all times and for ever, without intermission or interruption. 4 In *certitudine*, in the certainty; here we have the enjoyment of God, but in hope and expectation; but there in fruition, being continually made happy with the beatificall vision.

But thus much for the first thing, what this salvation is that God hath appointed us unto.

Quest. 2. The next thing to be discus'd is this, whether or no does Gods appointing of some men to bee objects of his wrath, and others to obtain salvation, does this decree of God give men any just plea or excuse, to embolden them to go on in sinning against God? or may a man thus argue, If God hath before

Quest. 2.

before all worlds appointed and decreed me to be a vessell of wrath, and his decrees are immutable and unchangeable; why then let me do what I will, hear never so many sermons, or perform never so good duties, yet it is impossible I should be saved; and on the other side, if God hath not appointed me to wrath, but to obtain salvation, why then I may live as I list, I need not hear, or read, or pray, or perform any holy duty, for I am sure I shall be saved? Beloved, though the Doctrine of Gods irrevocable and unchangeable Decrees, be very good in it selfe, yet there is a great deal of ill use made of it, by wicked men, who are very apt to entertain such corrupt reasonings as these are; but now let us a little enquire whether this Doctrine of Gods Decrees, does afford any such inferences or deductions as these: If I am appointed unto wrath, let me do what I can, it is impossible I should be saved, and if I am ordeined unto life, I may live as I list, I am sure I shall never be damned?

Now here I shall shew you in four or five particulars, that this Doctrine of Gods Decrees in appointing some men to be vessells of wrath, and others to obtain salvation, does no way embolden men to such conclusions as these are; for first, there is a quite contrary use made of it by the Apostle here in this place, in the verse preceeding my Text, saies he, *Let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet, the hope of salvation, Why? for God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.* And so the Apostle Peter makes the same use of it, in *1 Pet 1 5, 10. Give all diligence to make your calling & election sure: add to your faith vertue, so vertue knowledge, to knowledge temperance &c.* The assurance of your election, should be a motive to you, to add grace to grace, and not sin to sin; so that this is the first thing by way of answer: the Scripture makes another use of the assurance of our election, namely, to bee a motive to stir us up to add grace to grace, and holiness to holinesse. 2 Know this by way of answer, that God in his eternall decrees, appointing some men to obtain salvation, does in the same Decree appoint the means by them to bee used in order to their salvation, as well as their salvation it selfe. Indeed, had God said, I have determin'd to make such and such objects of mercy, and therefore they may do what they will,

wil, they shall be saved, this were something; but there is no such promise as this in the book of God, but as he has decreed any to salvation, so he has appointed them to use the means that tend to that end, as the Apostle saith, *He hath chosen us in him, before the foundations of the world were laid*; but what followest? Why, *That we should bee holy and without blame before him in love*: where God decrees an end, he likewise appoints the means that must be used towards the accomplishing of that end.

Eph. 1. 4.

3 Consider, you would count it a very ridiculous arguing, to make this inference in naturall things, and therefore it is vaine and foolish to argue thus in spirituall things; for God hath determined how long you and I, and every one of us shall live, and when and what death we shall die, and all the world cannot alter this decree of his. Now because these things are decreed by God, and his Decrees are unalterable; for us to argue that therefore we will not eat, drink, or sleep, but expose our selves to danger, and run into mischiefs, and the like, why, you cannot but count this very irrationall, even in naturall things, and therefore much more in spirituall things. I have read of a man that was one of the great fomenters of this opinion I am now speaking against, and he falling into an extreame fit of sicknesse, sent for a Doctor of Physick to come to him; and being come, desired him to administer something to him for his recovery, and to remove his distemper; the Doctor knowing him to be a man of that judgement, told him, Sir, you know every mans time is determined, and God has decreed how long you shall live, and his decrees are unchangeable, therefore what need you take any Physick, or use any means? for if hee hath appointed you shall recover of this distemper, you shall recover, he answered, it is true, but yea would not be perswaded to neglect the means, but desired him to administer something to him: the Physician did so, and by the blessing of God upon it, restored him to his former health, whereby hee was ever after convinced of the error of his former opinion: you are therefore to consider, that as God hath appointed the end, so like wise he hath appointed the means tending and cooperating to that end.

4 Consider further, that though a man doth know what the decrees of God are concerning him; yet this should not be

to him a bar or hinderance unto holinesse, or a spur or provocation unto godlinesse, because though God should never ordaine thee to life, yet thou dost owe homage or service to him, as he is thy Creatour, though thou couldest know (which thou canst not) that God hath appointed thee unto wrath, yet this can be no plea for thee to run out in rebellion against God; for as he is thy Creator or Maker, and thou the worke of his hands, he may lay claim to homage, service, and subjection from thee as his due debt; you owe these to him, as he is thy Creator.

But if thou dost know, that whereof one may be certainly assured, that thou art not appointed to be a vessel of wrath, but an object of mercy, why then there are stronger and greater obligations and bonds laid upon thee, to serve him with cheerfulness, and to be frequent in the exercises of holinesse. And thus I have done with the second particular.

3 We come now to the third Question in order, and that is this, whether God in appointing any man to life and salvation, hath respect to their foreseen faith and good works? whether the foresight of faith or good works, be the impulsive cause that moves God to decree any man to salvation?

In answering of this question, I shall lay down to you these three Conclusions.

1. It is most true that those whom God appoints unto salvation, shall before they do obtain it, have grace and holiness in their hearts: this is very true, for whom God does predestinate, them he will also call.

2. It is as true, that those that God did appoint to salvation, he did foresee that they should be holy, that all those whom he had ordained to life, should be sanctified. But,

3. Though God did foresee such men should be holy, yet his foreseeing of it was not the impulsive cause why they were ordained to life and salvation. God did foresee that every man whom he did predestinate, should be called: but yet Gods foreseeing of what good works those men should performe, this was not the impulsive cause that moved God to predestinate them to eternall life, which I shall prove and make good to you from Scripture, as in *Romans 11. 5, 6. There is saies the Apostle, a remnant according to election; but of what election?*

Quest. 3.

Whether foreseen faith and good works be the impulsive cause that moves God to decree any to salvation,

Ans.

1 Conclusion
Rom. 8. 29, 30.

election? Why, *the election of grace*; if this election were made for foresight of good works, it must bee called an election of works, that being the moving cause of it according to some mens opinions; but here you see it is called an election of grace. So 2 Timothy 1. 9. *Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began.* So again, in Eph. 1. 5. saith the Apostle, *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of Children by Jesus Christ to himselfe, according to the good pleasure of his will, not for their foreseen faith or good works:* and so againe in the ninth Verse, having made known unto us, the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he had purposed in himselfe; and again in the eleventh Verse, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsell of his own will.

It is meerly the good will and pleasure of God, that is the impulsive cause or motive, why he ordains or appoints any men to obtain salvation.

But now I shall demonstrate this, and make it clear and evident to you by reason, that God did never elect or chuse any man to be a vessell of glory, and to obtain salvation upon foresight or prevision of his good works, and that first,

1 Because God justifies no man for his having of good works, and therefore God elects none upon the fore-sight of his good works. God does not justifie men for the having and performing of good works; but we are justified freely by his grace; and if we seek to be justified by works, we are fallen from grace: much less therefore can a man be elected to salvation, because of Gods foreseeing of his good works.

2 Good works in us are the fruits and effects of our election, and therefore they cannot be the cause of it; the same thing cannot be both the cause and the effect of another thing: now good works they are the result of our election, for whom God hath chosen and elected, he hath chosen them to this very end, that they might be holy, and without blame before him in love, *Acts 22. 14.* It was said of Paul, *The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth.*

Rom. 9. 3, 6, 7.

Reasons why God did never elect any man to salvation, upon prevision of his good works.

Reason 1.

Rom. 3. 24.

Reason 2.

Ephes. 1. 4.

Reason 3.

3 If this were so, men would have something wherewith to boast before God; for if God did elect them, because he did foresee they would be holy and just, and upright, or the like, then they might boast and say, Lord, I am not so much bound to thee as beholding to my selfe, that I am saved; but God will have no flesh to glory in his presence: and he did elect us to salvation, not for any beauty or comeliness there was in us more then others, there was nothing in us could either desire or deserve his love, but only out of his free grace and mercie; hee set his love upon us, because hee will have mercy on whom hee will have mercy; and this makes us the more engaged to God in all the bonds of thankfulness and obedience, and to admire and magnifie his free grace and mercy towards us.

Reason 4.

4 All those good works you can possibly perform, cannot carry any equivalencie or proportion to that salvation that God doth chuse you to: our salvation is perfect and compleat; but the best of our services are not so, but full of imperfections and frailties, there is no proportion between them, and therefore they can bee no impulsive cause why God should chuse any man to life and salvation for the foresight of them.

Reason 5.

5 If election doth depend upon foreseen Faith or Workes, then infants so dying cannot be elected, because they neither have faith nor good works: But many infants are elected.

Reason 6.

6 We are not elected for Christs sake, therefore not for our own sakes. Christ indeed is the cause of our salvation, but not the cause of our election. Christ himselfe was predestinated, 2 Pet. 1. 10. and therefore hee could not bee the cause of our predestination. It is true, we are said to bee chosen in Christ, Eph. 1. 4. We are chosen in Christ, as in a common person, hee was the first person elected in order, and we in him. Suppose a new Kingdom to be set up, a new King is chosen, all his successors are chosen in him: God hath erected a Kingdome of glory, and hath chosen Christ for the King of it, and in him us, whom hee hath made Kings and Priests unto the most high God.

And thus I have done with the Doctrinal part, we come now to the Application: and the use that I shall make of it, shall bee only to draw from hence three or four practically inferences, and so conclude.

1 Is it so that God hath appointed a certain number of men and women to obtain salvation, and not to bee objects of his wrath; O then I beseech you in the feare of God, all you that do belong to the election of Grace, that you would take heed you do not undervalue and prostitute thoe souls of yours (to base and dishonourable imployments) that God hath appointed unto glory: shall that soul of thine which is a vessell of glory, be employed in doing the Devils drudgery, and in sinning against, and dishonouring of God? As it is unseemly for a vessell of Gold to be put to so base a use as to hold a mapps, excrements, so it is unsuitable for you that are vessels of honour, to have your soules filled with the dung and filth of sin and wickedness. Take heed therefore of prostituting your soules to sinfull and servile employments.

Severall practical inferences, from the Doctrine of election.

2 If this be so, then this confutes the Doctrine of the Sadducees, that held there was no resurrection of the body, no immortality of the soul, no salvation for Saints, no damnation for sinners: how could they have been of this judgement, if they had believed this Doctrine, that God to all eternity did elect some to salvation, and reject others to damnation? the Decrees of God must be false, if these opinions of theirs be true. Take heed of being practical Atheists, of living so in the world, as if there were neither salvation for Saints, nor damnation for sinners.

2 Inference.

3 Let this teach you patiently and contentedly to undergo all those troubles and afflictions you meet withall here in this life; seeing God hath appointed you to a Crown, why should not you be patient under a cross? seeing God hath appointed you to obtain salvation hereafter, why should not you be contented to bear any affliction here? What though God hath appointed thee to a prison, or persecution, or misery here in this life, so long as he hath not appointed thee to hell fire hereafter? This light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for you a far more exceeding and eternall weight of glory, and therefore let this bear up your hearts.

3 Inference.

4 If this be so, that there are a certain number of people appointed by God to obtain salvation, O then rest not satisfied, give no rest to your eies, nor slumber to your eie-lids, till you find some pledges and seals in your own hearts, that you are some of those that are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtaine salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

4 Inference.

The third Sermon.

I THESSALONIANS 5. 9.

For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.



Shall now in order, to the further prosecution of this great Doctrine of Predestination, lay you down seven doctrinall Conclusions concerning it. As first,

Doctrinall
Conclusions,
touching Pre-
destination.

I That a man that is ordained and appointed by God from all eternity to obtain salvation, may know that hee is so appointed and ordained; not only the Lord knowes who are his, but also man may certainly know that hee is appointed by God to obtain salvation. But now the Papists they are of another judgement, and look upon this truth as a very pernicious and presumptuous doctrine, that a man may be certainly sure of his salvation; they hold he can onely have a conjecturall faith, and not a faith of assurance. But it is a manifest untruth; for why should our Saviour, *Luk. 10. 20.* bid his Disciples *rejoice not so much because the spirits were subject to them, as because their names were written in Heaven*: how could they rejoice in this priviledge, if they were ignorant of it, or could not know that their names were written in the book of life? So in *Eph. 1. 5.* saies the Apostle, *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, they were assured of their adoption*, so in *Rev. 2. 17.* *To him that overcommeth, will I give to eat of the hidden Manna and will give him a white stone, and in that stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.* The new name here is regeneration, and the white stone is absolution: they have a white stone given them, that is, the Lord shall give them a seal, a pledge in their own hearts, that their sins are forgiven, and that they are brought into a state of grace and salvation, and

and he that hath this white stone shall know that he hath it.

But I shall prove and clear this further to you by demonstration, that a man may be assured of his election, and that first,

1 Because God commands and enjoins men to labour to make their calling and election sure, as in *2 Pet. 1. 10. Wherefore brethren, saies the Apostle, give all diligence to make your calling and election sure*; not sure on Gods part, but sure in reference to your knowledge of it; and if it were not a thing attainable, the Apostle would never enjoin us to doe it: therefore it is not a thing impossible, but which may bee obtained, and hath been obtained by many of Gods precious servants.

2 Other men may have a conjecturall knowledge of our salvation, as in *1 The. 1. 4. Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. Paul* did give a strong conjecture that the *Thessalonians* were elected of God; why now, if another man may guesse to right of us, then much more may we be assured of it our selves. So again, in *Phih. 4. 3. Paul* (speaking of some of his fellow-labourers, saith he, *whose names are in the book of life*; if others may know that our names are in the book of life, then much more our selves: we may be sure of our vocation, and if so, then may we also bee sure of our election: for effectuell vocation is an infallible mark of our election, *Rom. 8. 30.* And that we may be sure of our vocation, the Scripture often mentions; and this is the first Doctrinall Conclusion, those that are elected and appointed by God to obtaine salvation, may know and be fully assured that they are so appointed.

2 Observe this Conclusion, that no man can assuredly know that hee is elected and appointed by God to obtaine salvation, by climbing and searching into the decrees and secrets of God; for who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? but wee are to search and find it out by the efficacy of the decrees of God upon our hearts, if wee finde those fruits and effects of election upon our hearts, that do accompany those that are elected, then we may conclude that we are elected: In *2 Pet. 1. 10.* saies the Apostle, *Give all diligence to make your calling and election sure.* Election was before calling; but here Calling is put before Election; to note, that though election be before vocation, yet a man cannot know his election

2 Conclusion,

but.

but by his vocation, and therefore if you have a seal in your own heart of your effectuall vocation, from thence you may undoubtedly conclude your election, *Romans 8. 30.* for whom hee hath predestinated, them he hath also called; we may know our election as it is operative, and efficacious upon our hearts, in carrying us on in all the waies of new obedience; we must first prove our vocation, and then by that our election. If you do not try your election, and prove it by your sanctification, they are but wild conjectures, fond persuasions, enthusiasticall delusions, and bold presumptions of a deceived heart.

3 Conclusion.

3 Take this for a Conclusion, that though a man may know, and ought to know that he is elected and appointed by God to obtain salvation, yet hee ought not to know, nay, hee cannot know that he is appointed unto wrath. A man may make his election sure, but he cannot make his reprobation and damnation sure: we find some men in Scripture that have been sure of their election, but none that have been sure of their damnation. A man that runs on in wicked and sinfull courses, may say that he is not called, but he cannot say hee is not elected, no not the wickedst man in the world (except he have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost;) for though he may run on a long time in sinfull and pernicious courses, yet God may at last call him home to himself.

4 Conclusion.

4 That Gods decrees and appointments touching mens future estate and condition are irrevocable and unalterable; in *2 Tim. 2. 19.* The foundation of God standeth sure, that is, the decree and purpose of God, touching mans salvation, is unchangeable, it standeth sure: If the Lawes of the *Medes and Persians* were so absolute, that they could not be revert, then much lesse can the decrees of God be revert. No man that is not elected, can be elected, and no man that is elected, can be damned *John 6. 39.* saies Christ. *This is the Fathers will which he hath sent me, that of all those which he hath given me, I should lose none:* there is not one of them lost that were given unto Christ by Gods decree, *Rom. 11. 22.* God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew; those that God did first purpose to bring to eternall life, he cast away none of them.

Object.

But now the Papists and others doe very much oppose this Doctrine, and look upon the Decrees of God, as mutable and

various, and at this day this opinion breaks out amongst us, there are many that hold the Decrees of God are changeable, and there are three places of Scripture they alledge to prove it. The first is that in *John 6. 76.* where Christ saies to his Disciples, *Havenot I chosen twelve, and one of you is a Devill?* from whence they argue, that all those that are chosen of God, shall not obtain salvation by him.

There is a twofold chusing, an external and an internal chusing, and between these you must distinguish; where Christ saies, *Have I not chosen twelve?* he speaks there of an external choice to the Office of the Apostleship, *Judas* was not chosen in Gods eternall decree of election; for he was the son of perdition, and Hell was his own place; but onely externally to be an Apostle.

Ans.

2 Another place of Scripture they alledge against the immutability of Gods Decrees, is that in *Exod 32. 32, 33.* where *Moses* praies, that if God would not forgive the sins of the people, he should blot out his name out of his book. And the Lord said unto him, *Whoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book.* Now say they, If the names of those that are written in Gods book of life, may be blotted out, then the Decrees of God are changeable. So in *Revel. 22. 19.* it is said there, *That if any man shall take from the words of the Book of this prophesie, God shall take away his part out of the book of life.*

Obje.

Ans. I shall answer this Objection very briefly. Divines observe that there are three sorts of books attributed to God in Scripture.

Ans.

1 A Book of Providence, in *Psal. 139. 16.* *In thy book were all my members written,* that is, the book of Gods providence.

2 There is a book of Gods judgements, in *Revel. 20. 12.* *And I saw the dead, small and great stand before God, and the books were opened, and the dead were judged out of those things that were written in those books.* When Christ shall come to judgement, there shall be a great Book of Accompts opened, wherein all things that are done here upon the earth, are recorded.

3 There is a book of Life, wherein when any mans name is once written, it can never be blotted out again; But the Book of Life mentioned in Scripture, hath a double signification: some-

times by the Book of life is meant, the eternal decree and purpose of God, touching those that shall be saved by him, and in this sense it is to be taken, in *Phil. 4. 3.* whose names are in the book of Life, and to in *Luk. 10. 20.* Rejoice because your names are written in the Book of Life. And ordinarily in the New Testament, the Book of Life is to be taken for the eternall decree and purpose of God, touching those that shall be saved.

2 There is a book of Life in Scripture, which is to be taken, not for the eternall decree of God, but for the providences of God, and the speciall care and preservation of God over his Church. The preserving his people under the wings of his providence. This is called the Book of Life, as in *Exod. 32. 33.* *Who-soever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my Book,* that is, that man that shall go on in sin pertinaciously, obdutely, and presumptuously, I will blot his name out of my book, that is, call him out of my protection and providence, he shall be an excommunicated man. And in this sense it is taken by *Moses*, when he desired God to blot his name out of his Book.

So saies God in *Ezek. 13. 9.* *My hand shall be upon the Prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies, they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel;* which is all one as if he had said, They shall not be written in the Book of Life; not to be written in the Book of Life in this sense, is to bee excommunicated out of the Church.

I shall confirm this Doctrine to you further by demonstration, that the decrees of God are unchangeable and irrevocable; for were it otherwise, 1 God must needs be a mutable God, which is directly contrary to what the Scripture affirms of him, namely, *That with him there is no variablenesse nor shadow of change* *Jam. 1. 7.*

2 Jesus Christ (may I speak it with reverence) would be a liar, and falsifie his Word, if this were not true; for saies he in *John 10. 28.* *I give unto my sheep eternall life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.* Christ would not be as good as his word, if any of those that are given him by his Father, should be lost, or any of those that are appointed to salvation should come short of it.

3 If the decrees of God were mutable. then *Pauls* Golden Chain in *Rom. 8. 30.* would be broken: Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. We come now to a fifth Conclusion.

5 That the decrees of God in reference to salvation, run but to the fewest number of man-kinde in the world, Gods decrees touching the ordaining of men to life, run but to a very small and little remnant: the world of unbelievers are like flocks of *Goats*, very numerous, whereas the elect of God are but like sheep scattered here and there upon the mountains. The wicked are like weeds that grow every where; but the godly are trees of righteousness, of Christs own planting, planted but very sparingly in the world; Christs flock is but a little, very little flock, in comparison of the world; there is but a remnant according to the election of grace, a very small remnant that shall obtain salvation: the rest are hardened.

5 Conclusion.

6 Though the decrees of God in reference to mens salvation, extend but to a very few, yet this is no ground at all for us to have hard thoughts of God, or to look upon him as cruell and unmercifull: the reasons of this were in part hinted before.

6 Conclusion.

1 Because God is not bound to save any, and therefore it is no act of cruelty, or injustice in him that he save so few.

2 God hath a sovereignty over all his creatures, and may do with them what he pleaseth, and none can say unto him, What doest thou?

3 The Lord would have shewed more mercy, had he saved but one man in the world, then he would have done rigour of justice, had he condemned all, because all have sinned, and thereby deserved damnation, and God is not bound to save any of them.

4 God hath dealt better with us then he did with the Angels that sinned; for you know all the Angels in Heaven that sinned, in aspiring to be like the most High, they were all thrown down and damned, not one of them being saved, but are all reserved in chains of darkness, to the judgement of the great day; but yet notwithstanding, though all Mankind had sinned, and so fell short of the glory of God, yet they were not all condemned, and that because Jesus Christ took not upon him

the nature of Angels, but of man; and therefore though all the Angels that sinned perished, yet though we have all sinned, we do not all perish; but there is a remnant rescued from death and damnation, and appointed to obtain salvation.

5 The world fares the better for those very persons that are within the decrees of God to obtain salvation; for were it not for Gods decree of election, that such a number of men should be saved, the world should not have continued to this day, and it shall continue no longer then till the number of the elect are fulfilled, and then the Elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth, and all that is therein shall be burnt up: God gives deliverance and safety, and preservation to the World for the Elects sake, we are beholding to the decrees of God in reference to the Elect, that the world continues to this day. The men of the world fare better in regard of the comforts of this life for the sake of Gods Elect. The daies of affliction that came upon *Jerusalem* and all *Judea*, were shortned for the elects sake, *Mark* 13. 20. For their sakes it was that *Israel* was not made as *Sodome*, and like unto *Gomorrab*; that a remnant was left, *Isa.* 1. 9. So it was, *Isa.* 65. 8. Thus saith the Lord, As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, destroy it not, for a blessing is in it: so will I do for my servants sakes, that I may not destroy them all. And *Job* witnesseth, that an Island is delivered by the pureness of the hands, *Job* 22. 30.

7 Conclusion.

Lastly, observe this Conclusion, that though you are bound to pray for the remission of your sins, and the sanctification of your nature, yet you are not bound by God, to pray for your election, why? because this Worke is perfectly done already, as we were not to pray for the Creation of the world, because that work is perfected; so neither are we to pray for our election, because that work is fully done already. Workes perfectly done, we are not to pray for; but we must pray for those effects & fruits of Predelstination and Election, as Vocation, Sanctification, Remission, Regeneration, and the like, but not for Election.

Wee come now to the Application; and the Use that I shall make of what hath been said, shall be, first, by way of information and triall, that you may know whether you are in the number of those that are appointed by God to salvation or no, and then

Use 1.

Several marks
of our election

then by way of consolation and comfort; first, for triall.

Ans. 1. If you be within the decrees of God for salvation, then sooner or later will God cause the power of his Word to come with authority and conviction upon your conscience, as in *1 Thes 4. 5.* *Knowing, Brethren beloved (saies the Apostle) your election of God; for our Gospel came not to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost.* The Word will come with power and conviction upon your consciences sooner or later, if you belong to the election of grace.

2 You shall be sooner or later effectually called; *for whom God hath predestinated, them he will also call, Rom. 8. 30.*

3 If the Lord hath ordained thee unto salvation, he will beget and increase sanctification in thee; likewise in *1 Pet. 1. 2.* *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus:* All the elect of God shall have the sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon their hearts sooner or later.

The fourth Sermon.

1 THESSALONIANS 5. 9.

For God hath not appointed us unto wrath, but to obtain Salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.

I Shall now speake something to you by way of consolation and comfort, lest there be any poor humble dejected soule amongst you, that fears he is reſected of God, and not in the number of those appointed to salvation.

Let mee tell you this to your comfort, that when I lay down the fruits and effects of election to you, it is not to be understood that these should bee in you as soon as you were born; for *Paul*, though he was elected, yet he was a man of a very

wicked life and conversation thirty years together; and therefore do not say you are cast off and rejected of God, because you are so wicked, for a man may live a long time in sin & yet be elected by God to salvation for all that; as in *Tis. 3. 3.* saies the Apostle, *We our selves also sometimes were foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts, and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another; but* (saies he) *afterwards the kindnesse and love of God our Saviour appeared towards us; intimating, that an elect man may be for a long time a slave to his lusts, and live in sin? when yet it is the purpose of God to bring him to glory.*

2 When I press these things as signs of your election, I doe not presse the having them actually, but habitually; for in children, though they have not an actuall conviction from the word, yet they may have grace habitually in them, which is sufficient; there must be either habituall grace, or actuall in every one that goes to Heaven.

3 Though you doe not find and feel these effects and fruits of Election sensibly in you, yet if they be there in reality, it is enough to bring you to glory. I do not presse the having of these things gradually, but sincerely; an elect person may want many a degree of grace, but if he have them in sincerity, though in the least measure, it is a sufficient evidence of his election.

We come now to the last part of the Text, *but so obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.* In these words, beloved, are laid down the glorious titles that are given to the Son of God, he is a Lord, a Jesus, and a Christ, and he is our Lord Jesus Christ.

Before I come to raise a Doctrine from the words, it will be needfull to doe these four things: 1 To explain these titles to you. 2 To note something to you from the position of the words: And 3 From the composition of the words; and lastly, from the application or appropriation of these titles.

1 For the explication, *by our Lord Jesus Christ:* the first title is *Lord*, and this is a name of Dominion and sovereignty, and implies a power and strength in Christ, to carry on the work of our salvation. If Christ were a Jesus and not a Lord, he could not save us.

2 He is *the Lord Jesus*; as Lord is a title of Dominion, so Je-

Jesus is a title of Mercy and Bounty, and signifies a Saviour; he is not only a Lord, and so hath power to do us good; but he is also a Jesus, and so he hath a will to do us good. The dialect of the Old Testament, is the *Lord our God*, but never *the Lord Jesus*, till in the New Testament.

3 He is *the Lord Jesus Christ*, (that is) he is Gods anointed, he was set apart and appointed by God to carry on the great work of mans salvation; Christ is a name of office and function.

2 I observe further from the position of these titles, here is Lord put before Jesus: 1 To let us know, that wee can never look upon Christ as a Jesus, a Saviour, if wee doe not take him and own him as our Lord, to rule over us, and reign in us, Christ can never do the work of a Saviour and redeemer towards you, unless you have your wils ruled and governed by him, and yield obedience and subjection to him. 2 To inform us that Christ could never be a person able to accomplish the work of our salvation, if he were not a Lord; and therefore his divine nature is put in the first place, to assure us that he is able to carry on the work of our salvation.

3 I note further from the composition of the words, it is not said, by *our Lord Christ Jesus*, but by *our Lord Jesus Christ*: the divine and humane nature of Christ being united in one person, the *Lord* and *Jesus* together; to these two titles in one person, there is an unquestionable power and efficacy to carry on the salvation of the sons of men. Many men may have a will and desire to relieve those that are in necessity, and do good to others, but do want power and ability to do it, and others may have ability, and yet want a will to do it. Power without will, would be but an unkind ableness; and wil without power, would be but an unable kindness; if Christ had not been Lord, he could not have saved us; if he had not been Jesus, he would not have saved us.

But now Jesus Christ he hath both power & wil to do us good, he neither wants power, because he is a Lord; nor doth he want a wil, because he is a Jesus; and therefore well may the Apostle join these together, *we obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ*.

4 From the appropriation of these Titles, he doth not say by a Lord Jesus Christ, or by the Lord Jesus Christ, but by our Lord Jesus Christ; you will never obtain salvation by Christ, if you have

have not a peculiar interest in him. Beloved; it will nothing avail you that there is a Christ, and a Jesus, and a Lord, unless you can claim this appropriating term, to say he is yours; we obtain salvation, not by a Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ, but by our Jesus Christ. And thus have I spent a little time in hinting to you what is observable from the explication, position, composition, and appropriation of these words; the Doctrine from hence that I intend to insist upon, is this:

Doct.

That the Lord Jesus Christ is the person appointed by God the Father, by whom all the elect of God shall obtain salvation; *We are not appointed unto wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Cauti

In the handling of this point, I shall first premise three Cautions, and then answer and resolve some Questions.

1 Take this Caution; though Jesus Christ be the person by whom we must obtain salvation, yet all the world shall not be saved by him, there are but few persons in the world that shall obtain salvation by Jesus Christ.

2 That there are no more saved by Jesus Christ, who is the person appointed by God for men to obtain salvation by, the fault is not in Christ, but in our selves, for there is virtue and efficacy enough in Christ, to save as many worlds as there are men in the world, but the fault lies in us, *We will not come unto Christ, that we may have life, John 5. 40.*

3 Observe this Caution, though Jesus Christ be the person appointed by God to carry on the work of mans salvation, yet this does no way encourage any man to a neglect and carelessness in working out his own salvation; for though Christ must save thee meritoriously, yet thou must be diligent in working out thy own salvation, by way of applying the merits and righteousness of Christ to thy self, *Phil. 2. 12.* The common rule of *Augustine* is true, Though God made man without his help, yet he will not save him without his help; by way of duty man must use those means that God hath prescribed in his Word, in order to the working out of his own salvation. We come now to the handling of those Questions which I promised to resolve, which are these two.

Qui facit te sine te, non salvabit te sine te.

Quest. 1. What kind of salvation is that we obtain by Christ?

Quest.

Quest. 2. How may it be said that Christ is the Person that God hath appointed by whom we shall obtain salvation?

Quest. 1 What kinde of salvation is that wee doe enjoy by Christ?

Ans. 1 It is a perfect salvation; secondly, a salvation singly obtained: and thirdly, an everlasting salvation: here are these three excellent properties in Christ, that is the Saviour of the Elect: he saves them perfectly, he saves them singly, and he saves them everlastingly.

1 Christ is said to save the Elect perfectly, *Heb. 7. 25.* *He is able to save them to the utmost that come unto God by him;* but though Christ saves to the utmost, yet we must come unto him first. Christ saves perfectly, he saves the body, and he saves thy soul; he saves thee from sin, and from the punishment of sin; he saves thee from the stith of sin, and saves thee from the guilt of sin. Christ hath gotten a perfect conquest over all our enemies, he is not a Saviour that does his work by halves, but hee saves perfectly.

2 Christ saves his Elect singly, he hath no Copartner in the carrying on of the work of their salvation, *Acts 4. 12.* *Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved;* There is no other Person, nor way, nor means in the world to save men by, but by Jesus Christ. I may allude to this place, he trod the wine-press of his Fathers wrath alone, and of all the people there was none with him, he performed the work singly; and therefore the Church of *Rome* does very ill to join good works and intercession of Saints as Copartners with Christ in the work of Redemption; for Christ did the work alone, and therefore the Psalmist tels us, *Psal. 49. 7, 8.* *No man can by any means redeem his brother, or give to God a ransom for him, for the redemption of their soul is precious.*

3 Christ saves everlastingly, he does not save as men are saved here below, here a man may bee delivered out of one danger, and yet fall into another; be saved from one mischiefe, and yet bee destroyed by another: but now Christ saves us everlastingly, *Heb. 5. 9.* *He is become the author of eternall salvation to all that obey him.* And thus much for the kinds of salvation, Christ saves perfectly, singly, and everlastingly.

Quest. 2 How may Christ be said to obtain salvation for the Elect? The Philosophers have counted Christians very fools for them to expect salvation by another mans sufferings, and hope for life by another mans death; they lookt upon the Doctrine of Christs sufferings as a very ridiculous thing. Now (beloved) I shall shew you in four particulars, what it is that Christ hath done, to which the Scripture ascribes the obtaining of our salvation. As 1 The Scripture ascribes our salvation to the sufferings and passions of Christ. 2 To the resurrection of Christ. 3 To the ascension. And lastly to the intercession of Christ.

1 The salvation of men in Scripture, is ascribed to the sufferings and bitter passions of Christ; to this it is ascribed meritoriously, this was the price *Christ* paid; and hence it is that you meet with such phrases as these so often, that *we are saved by his blood, and through faith in his blood*, in *Rom 5.9. Heb. 10. 19. so in Heb. 5.8 9 Being made perfect through sufferings, he became the Author of eternall salvation to all that obey him*: so that here you may see the great grace, and infinite love of Jesus Christ, in suffering for us, that rather then we should lose our souls, hee would lose his own life; O behold and admire the inestimable love of the Son of God; your sins are the price of blood, and all your pardons are written in characters of blood: by Christs death we live, and by his stripes wee are healed, if Christ had not died, we must; but he came into the world in the form of a Servant, and willingly laid down his life for us, that so by his death we might live eternally. Our salvation is ascribed to the passions and sufferings of *Christ*, as the meritorious cause of it.

2. It is ascribed to the resurrection of Christ, whereby hee manifested to the world, that hee was a perfect Saviour, this is ascribed to it manifestly; for had Christ died, and not risen again, every one would have thought it very improbable and unlikely, that he that could not raise himself from the dead, should yet save others from death: therefore saies the Apostle, in *1 Pet. 1. 3, 4. Blessed be God who has begotten us again to a lively hope, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fades not away, reserved in Heaven for us*; not only by his death, but by his resurrection, we have a lively hope, that seeing Christ hath conquered death, and the grave, and

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all the powers of darknesse, that therefore he is a perfect Saviour of all the Elect of God, so in 1 *Per. 3. 21* we are saved by Baptisme, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that manifesting to the world, that Jesus Christ was an absolute Saviour, and a conquerour over death and the grave. It is said, *Rom. 1. 4* Christ was declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, *Rom. 5. 10*. For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

3 The Scriptures likewise ascribe our salvation to the ascension of Christ, to that it is ascribed preparatorily, after that he was fourty daies among his Disciples, he was taken up, or ascended into Heaven; but before he went, he tells his Disciples, Behold, I go before, but it is to carry on your salvation for you; in *John 14. 2*. I go away, saies Christ; but I go to prepare a place for you; if it were not so, I would have told you, and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to my selfe, that where I am, there you may be also; Christ is gone before into Heaven to prepare a place for us, he must not only prepare our hearts for Heaven, but he must prepare Heaven for us; we enter into the holy of holies by Jesus Christ.

4 And lastly, it is ascribed to the intercession of Christ, and that applicatively. This the Apostle expresseth in *Hib. 7. 25*. wherefore he is also able to save to the uttermost, those that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. So in *Rom. 8. 34*. who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Christ did not onely suffer a great deal for us, but he arose from the dead, and ascended into Heaven, and there he intercedes for us at his Fathers right hand, and al this to carry on the work of our salvation; we have the benefit both of his passion, resurrection, ascension, and intercession in order to our salvation.

I shall now make some Application; onely one Objection must first be removed.

Me thinks, I heare a licentious Libertine reason thus with himselfe: is this so, that I must expect salvation by Christ; and he hath done and suffered so much to ob. in it, why then I hope that in Christ I am a happy man, and in a very good condition.

Ans. This that I say may be true, and yet thou never be in the better condition, for Christ is not appointed by God to carry on thy salvation, unlesse there be these four things wrought in thy heart, before thou canst receive any benefit or comfort from him, (i. e.) he that would receive benefit by Christ, must look upon him, and receive him, as well for his Lord; as for his Jesus; not onely to take him as a Jesus, to obtain mercy and salvation by him, but likewise to look upon him as his Lord, and to perform all obedience, and yield all subjection to him: God hath exalted Christ to be a Prince, and a Saviour, by whom men should receive remission of sins.

You must not onely look to be saved by his blood, but also to be ruled by his command; I may apply to this what *Alexander* said of his two friends; saies he, *Hephestion* loves me as I am *Alexander*, but *Craterus* loves me as I am King *Alexander*; one for his person, the other for his benefits he received by him; So some love Christ as he is a Lord, and an executor of justice and judgement; but others love him because of the benefit and advantage they receive by him, because he delivers them from wrath to come, else they would never look after a *Messiah*.

2 If Jesus Christ be the person ordained by God to carry on the work of thy salvation, then know this, that sooner or later the Gospell shall come upon thy heart with an irresistible power, in *Rom. 1. 16*. To every one that believeth, it is the power of God. So in 1 *Cor. 1. 8*. The preaching of the crosse is to them that are saved the power of God.

3 If thy Christ be thy Saviour, he will not only free thee from the damnation of sin, but also from the dominion and power of sin. Christ will not be a Saviour to free thee from Hell, but also from sin. And therefore is Christ called a Saviour, because he saves his people from their sins, *Mat. 1. 21*. from the dominion and reigning power of sin; and therefore, beloved, you that lay claim

claim to a Saviour, and a Jesus to pardon all your sins, and yet cannot say that God hath mortified, and subdued any sin in you, you are very much deceived, for Jesus Christ saves from sin as well as from hell.

4 Know thus much, that if Christ be thy Saviour, he will work thy heart to an Evangelical obedience to his will, in *Heb. 9.9.* *Christ is become the author of eternall salvation*, but to whom? why? to all that do obey him; and therefore you that continue in rebellion and stubbornness of heart against God, running on in waies of sinfulness, and still not bring your necks under Christs yoke, you deceive your selves, and lay a presumptuous claim to Christ, and to salvation and happiness by him.

Use 1. If this be so, that Christ is the person by whom all the elect shall obtain salvation, why then do not ascribe thy salvation to any thing but only to Jesus Christ, neither to Saints or Angels, or men, nor to the intercession of the Virgin *Mary*, nor to any thing within thee, or without thee; but only to Jesus Christ, who saves to the uttermost all that come unto God by him.

2 Be convinced of thy own insufficiency and inability to save thy selfe, every man is born with merits in his heart, and naturally thinks himselfe sufficient to be his own Saviour: one man depends upon his duties and services, another upon his graces, &c. but you should labour to be cast out of all conceits of your own strength & righteousness, & sufficiency, & wholly depend upon Christ, who is the person appointed by God, to carry on the work of thy salvation.

3 Think nothing too much to do, too great to suffer, too dear to part withall, for that Christ who thought nothing too much to do, or too grievous to suffer, that so he might accomplish the work of thy salvation: If Christ left heaven for thee, do not thou think it much to lose earth for him, if he came out of his Fathers bosome for thee, then be not thou unwilling to leave Father or Mother, or Friends, or any thing for him; if he underwent sufferings, reproaches, afflictions, persecutions, yea, death it selfe for thee, why should you repine at, or be impatient under any trouble or misery you meet with here in the world for his sake? We should consider with our selves, that if Christ be the person appointed by God to carry on our salvation, and he could not doe it but by suffering (and undergoing the punishment due to our sins) by his resurrection, ascension, and intercession, we should count nothing too much to do or suffer for him.

4 Let this teach you to magnifie and bless the Name of Christ, to prize him, love him, and cleave to him all our daies; will you not prize and love him that hath done so much for you?

I remember I have read a story of an *Elephant*, who being fallen down, and unable to help himselfe, or get up again, by reason of the inflexibleness of his legs, a Forrester coming by, helped him up, wherewith the *Elephant* by the very instinct of nature was so affected, that he followed this man, would doe any thing for him, and never left him till his dying day. Now if there be such love exprest by brute beasts, to those that have done them any good, should not we much more love and prize Christ, that hath done so much for us; for we were fallen, and could not recover or help our selves, and Christ hath lift us up, and redeemed us with his own blood, when we were lost and undone. O how should this provoke us to cleave unto Christ, to love him, and obey him, and yield subjection to him all our daies!

FINIS.

